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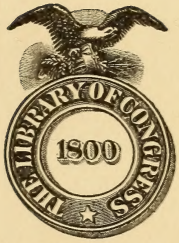

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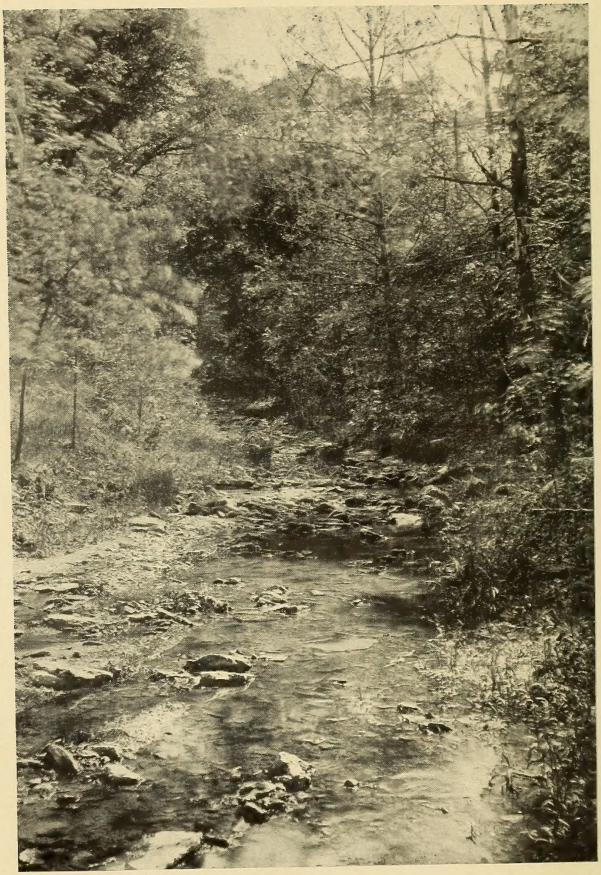

THE MURMURING MAID

QUESTS OF A BIRD LOVER

BY

JENNIE BROOKS

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To

ELEANOR H.

whose loving kindness shines through sunny days, or dark; and to whose graciousness this little flock of birds owes its further flight out into a lovely world; and in whose trees and beautiful garden all birds find sanctuary

I am indebted to *Lippincott's Magazine,* and various other periodicals, for the privilege of reprinting in book form some of these sketches.

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"When is it Spring? When spirits rise,
Pure crocus-buds where the snow dies;
When bits of blue flit and sing,
Playing at birds—then is it Spring?"
"When is it Spring? When the bee hums?"

"When bright ways numberless we see,
And thoughts spring up, and hopes run free,
And wild new dreams are all on wing
Till we must either fly or sing
With riotous life—be sure 'tis Spring."

QUESTS OF A BIRD LOVER

A LEADING OF PROVIDENCE

"My brothers, the birds, much ought ye to praise your Creator, Who hath clothed you with feathers, and given you wings to fly, and hath made over unto you the pure air, and careth for you without your taking thought for yourselves."

'Twas a hazy, lazy afternoon, just the day to wander along sleepy roads and climb distant hills, following flit of wing and tone of bird; but, though "Riley" was companionable to a degree, I wanted someone along to be happy with me in the big beautiful out-of-doors. But to my invitation, with one accord, came answer from friends, "I pray thee, have *me* excused."

Now, there are roads innumerable, tree-bordered, leading out of the little, western college town. "Blue Mound" way is one, "Eudora Road" another; the old "Santa Fe Trail," run-

ning toward the sunset; and for months, I had not thought of crossing the somnolent "Kaw" to the other side. Why, then, should it on this day seem so imperative a thing to do? Someone knew better than I—Someone Who allows not even a small gray sparrow to fall without His knowledge.

Almost, I had turned petulantly about for home, when a town-weary friend came in sight, her wits a-dust with the powdery whirlings from asphalt, but her heart a-dream with primroses!

"To cross the river? Yes, oh, yes let's go to the greenhouse on that side!" came joyous response, "I want some flowers."

Flowers, indeed! "No botanical excursion is this," I declared sternly, "but a bird-hunt,—away off beyond those misty hills!"

Faint acquiescence from my friend as she climbed into our "one hoss shay" but ever and anon, as we jogged along, came to my ear the wistful murmur, "I *wish* I could have had the flowers!"

"Oh, why did I ask her?" I pondered impatiently, "thus to spoil my day!" But "Riley" stubbornly kept his chosen road, and I was still determined on my bird quest.

"Just beyond the hills!" I urged.

" 'Tis primrose time!" came melancholy reply.

I looked into her disappointed face. Well—I

have "Riley" every day; every day she walks. Jerk go the reins, and, turning, we stumble over wide fields, "across lots" to the. greenhouse With mighty poor grace, I gave up! No birds to-day, that's certain!

Hot, sandy, sun-baked, lay the flat land, a wide waste of one-time flooded pasture, but eventually we reached our destination, hitched "Riley" to a one-rail fence, and alighted.

Happily, now she had her way, my friend went up to meet the Mistress of the Flowers, while I remained discontentedly outside, digging the toe of my shoe into the sand, and grumbling into "Riley's" slow-wagging ear.

Flutter of wing, and cry of bird! It smote my heart as quickly as my hearing. Alert in an instant was I.

An unrecognizable bird tone to me, but, I scrambled wildly through the wicket gate, up the wooden steps, and ran around the house, following a call of exquisite pain.

A beautiful, distraught male cardinal bird beating his life out against the bars of a tiny cage!

I almost fell upon my knees in thankfulness!

My afternoon was not to be wasted after all!

How he suffered—that bird! Absolutely crazed with fear, his eyes wild and staring, feathers torn and ragged, besmirched with blood,

from his frantic efforts to escape a prison all too small, all too wicked, in its confinement of the royal prisoner!

"T'chip! T'chip!" With his own gay note I tried to soothe him, but, beside himself with fear, it was impossible he should recognize a friend, and, like a sobbing child, could not stop the hoarse, choking notes that crowded from his throat—notes of such anguish as I had never, in many years of bird-work, been unfortunate enough to hear!

With my heart beating in my throat, I looked helplessly on, watching him flutter, and fly, and strike his panting red breast against the imprisoning wires, knowing nothing just then of the laws of that State concerning "The Little Brothers," of St. Francis.

Came, then, to me her hands full of primroses, this erstwhile messenger of God. Primroses—magic flower of allurement, destined for the green earth-bed of one much loved. I wonder if what followed on this flower-quest, made for that one, in Paradise, a single day "that is as a thousand years"—a single day one degree happier?

"How do you happen to have a red-bird caged?" in smoothest tones of conciliation I asked the savage-looking old lady of the garden.

"Well, he flew into the greenhouse after the flowers, and I just caught him with my hands and

shut him up," she exulted. "I had another one a few years ago and I sold him for five dollars!"

My Primrose lady stood aghast, while I stammered, and stuttered, "It's wicked to shut up such a bird! I will buy him and set him free!" And I emptied my purse before her.

"Well—he don't go for *that!*" was the contemptuous answer, "I've already had an offer of three dollars from the newsboy!"

Unbelievable, this, so I demanded: "How long has he been in that cage?"

"Since yesterday, and he ain't et a thing er drank!"

She fingered my pence in disgust and raised her price above the newsboy's offer. Would not free him for less—so, we left—more shame to us.

What was he to me—that scarlet-winged songster? Why should I care?

I'll tell you. My first glimpse of his distress, and his pitiful notes waked a train of joyous memories. Pictures in as endless succession as the days of recurring seasons came before my eyes of a white-capped, snowy haired mother befriending all the birds of the air—not "preaching" to them as the good friar of Assisi, but sharing her every crumb with the feathered folk who came *not* at her call, but at very first sight of her at breakfast in the vine-shaded porch, fighting for place on her tray, and snatching up the crumbs as uncon-

cernedly as you could imagine; cardinals, always, even tamer than the other birds, and in good time their babies with them—cardinals all day, and every day; cardinals nesting on the porch; building in the honeysuckles for her especial benefit; cardinals joyously whistling about the house night and day; small wonder I could not sleep that night—for thought of one of her friends a prisoner! Had she not been—in a way—a prisoner herself? Imprisoned in a lovely old house it is true, tied mostly to her chair, and living truly,—in that chair, from dawn to dark, out under a leafy greenness for years, with the birds her companions, as fearless of her gentle self as if she were one of them. Thus the time went by—birds, bees, flowers, a softly stepping of lovely old age into heavenly—not mansions (it couldn't be)—but gardens—she so loved them! Among all the crowd of feathered folk who so missed her, so mourned her not one was so faithful as the darling cardinals, the memory of whose questing for her in that long gone April time yet evoked my tears.

I rose with the dawn determined to do something, in *some way,* to not alone rescue the cardinal in question, but, also, to prevent the capture of other cardinals. My urgent call to "K. S. U." on the telephone was answered by a certain University bird-man who assured me "There is no law to fit the case." Another declared, "There

is a law"; another bade me "Bluff it out and free the bird at any price!"

So much for men-folk.

Then I bethought me of a courageous little "Humane Society" friend, and I "hitched" up old "Riley" and hurried away to interview her. My story was as a match set to straw, and on fire with indignation she consulted a learned Judge, he pointed out the law, armed her with a ponderous tome, and sent us on our way rejoicing. The evening previous on our homeward journey, we had gone to the Mayor, who approved our action, but said we must go to Topeka, the Capital, and get a writ—(whatever that may be!) and a lot of "blue-tape" must be cut ere anything could be done.

Meanwhile the bird would die—as such deaths had occurred after but two hours of confinement!

A Legislator said: "There *is* no law to free that bird. The bird is the property of the woman who captured him. It's a shame, but you can't touch him!" So much for one who *makes* the laws.

But "She of the Tender Heart," nothing daunted, tucked the fat law-book under her arm, and "Riley" carried us back to the Place of Anguish. My proposition was (for I sure was afraid of the old lady), "Let me *buy* the bird, and *then* you read the law to her," hoping to get out of the

way before the storm broke. We found the bird still alive, and his captor amazed at our return.

"Will you sell me the bird for a silver dollar?" I asked, though I had come with a blank check. The opulent newsboy had evidently not appeared and should the nearly exhausted cardinal die on her hands she would be at a total loss; so, with a bad grace, she accepted my offer.

Into the cage went a careless hand, roughly dragging out the little prisoner, whose scream of fear was echoed in the scream of a wee child who clung about the Flower-woman's knees crying out in terror at the bird's suffering.

"She of the Tender Heart," fortified by her law-book, stood scarlet with wrath and tearful with sympathy, and when I had made my escape to the out-of-doors with the now quiet cardinal safely cuddled in the gloom of my wicker basket, the "Tender-Hearted" but the "Firm" laid down the law covering song-birds as it was to be read in the Statutes of Kansas, ending with, "We'll let you off this time, but if we ever catch you again caging a song-bird, you will be prosecuted to the full extent of the 'LAW.' "

'Twas a joyful home-coming! Even lop-eared "Riley" shared our enthusiasm and brought us gaily clattering down the main street of the little city.

The old Judge, stately of mien, courteous of

manner, descended his stone steps to receive his law-book, to peep into our basket, and to announce in ardent tones, "The *pen,* madam, is mightier than the sword!"—an endorsement I was heartily glad of, for "She of the Tender Heart" does not temper justice with mercy, and in our interview with the Flower-lady I had expected, every instant, to hear her exclaim, with Alice's Queen: *"Off with her head!"*

The Legislator, suave, politic, hurried from his office crying, "Did you get him?" and the venerable, white-haired Mayor, laughing, delighted, stumped across the street with his cane, "Well, well, well, well! That's *good!* Let me see him."

The occupant of our willow-basket acquitted himself gallantly. As man after man peeped in at him, he greeted each with his optimistic note, "T'chap! T'chip!"

Out to the beautiful "Sunnyside" we carried him, up under the big elms to the south porch. There, in the golden light of a dropping sun we opened wide our basket. Absolutely still sat the little prisoner. "T'chip! T'chip!"

"She of the Tender Heart" baptized the bird with happy tears, and I of the Accusing Conscience, laying my hand softly upon him, said, "Because of that 'Friend of the Birds' who loved you, old fellow, you are going to have a beautiful time" and I lifted him out, opened wide my hand,

and, without a tremor of fear, he flew into a little peach-tree directly in front of us. He preened himself with utmost nonchalance, shook out his feathers, and, in wide flight, rose on glad wings to the highest elm-tree top, and sang, and sang, and sang!

Did our cardinal win him a wife, and build in the trumpet-vine?

Perhaps—who knows? Or did he tempt the Providence that had befriended him and go winging his way over the river to old home scenes? Who can tell? A cardinal *did* build that summer, in the trumpet-vine, and I like to think that it was an act of gratitude.

THE ALIENS

"But 'tis well and right
Safest you will find—
That the out of sight
Should be out of mind."

Came to me a call over the telephone:

"Two birds here in a box for you! Just came in from Montana!"

Magpies! Come at last! My heart beat fast at prospect of two birds in our silent house—not only beautiful to look at, but who would hold me in cheerful converse!

Away from the haunts of man, their language would, naturally, not be ornate with profanity. "Old Maria," a relic of "Quantrell" times, promptly told me of a twelve-year caged magpie of her acquaintance.

"Miss Jinny," she said, "de way dat bird swah —um-umph! He jes a-cussin' awful! But he dun stop his foolin' fo' me! *Yaas* 'um! I sez to him one day, 'Look a'*hyeh!* Yo' *bettah quit* dat kin' o' talk! Ef yo' got de sense to *say* dem words, den yo' got de sense to *know* what yo' sayin'! an', o' cose, yo' got de sense to know *bettah!* Now

yo' bettah jes stop dat *cussin'!* An' he nevah swah one word befo' me—nevah, no mo'! *Yaas* 'um!"

Naturally magpies became of even more interest to me.

Such a small box as it proved to be to have carried two young birds half way across the Continent, and how the little prisoners chattered of the exigencies of travel when I peered through the slatted cover! Unattractive enough they looked, poor things! So cramped, so confined, so dirty! But when I took them home, and freed them, their joy at such roomy quarters was reward enough for the sacrifice of our guest-chamber, for I emptied it of all things but window shades.

I hunted up two long, gnarly appletree sticks for perches; I supplied them with a large box of gravel and sand; and I gave to them, for purposes of bathing, a huge milk-pan of water. This latter both birds fought shy of until I plunged them in with my own hands; then, as I loosed them, they repeated, voluntarily, the ablution, again and yet again trailing their bedraggled tails through the bath.

Ever so long I had wanted to study a magpie. Ever so long had my young friends out on "Deerfield Ranch" in Montana kept an eye open for the capture of a bird, and magpies are among the

most difficult of wild birds to secure. A certain curator of a prominent museum in the East has, this year, spent months among the Bad Lands of Montana in getting a few specimens only. The bird is swift of flight and sails through the air like a ship—its wings for sails—is very wary, and wildest of "our little brothers of the air," and the capture of the two which came to me had involved much time and hard work, and I appreciated them accordingly.

The magpie lays from four to six eggs, of a grayish color and much speckled. Four youngsters had flown before my friend raided the homestead and secured the two remaining birds, not, however, without a hard fight with the old birds, whose weapons—bills that seemed made of boxwood—were not to be carelessly encountered.

The nest was in a dead cedar, high up on the hillside of a coulee, with "greasewood" growing thickly, and with only range-cattle and coyotes to witness their isolated home-making. The nest hung high, twelve feet from the earth, the dense greenness of the other cedars making a splendid background, and the blue berries of the greasewood shining out below like jewels, while the pink of wild roses glowed against beds of fern moss that covered warmly the roots of the trees. Had they an idea of the beauty of the location, think you, when they selected it? The nest was an

awkward affair, made of bullberry twigs, many of them three inches around, very thorny and awkward to carry, and showed the powerfulness of their beaks. Fully four feet across, clumsily made, the opening was comparatively small, and the lining was of mud plastered in fashion of a robin's nest. The twigs they used are broken off by cattle rubbing against them.

Being caught and kept, for a time, caged and hung out of doors in a small grove on the ranch, the unwonted freedom of a large room mystified the two travelers amazingly! They had tasted no freedom, you understand, and seen nothing of the world except as it looked from their aërial home, and an express car, with the exception of a few excursions when the male bird broke bonds and fled from his cage into the tree tops, where only the calling of his "sister" kept him in the vicinity, until, after much trouble, he was recaptured.

On June 29th the birds were caught, and they reached me in August. I had been warned that they were tricky and would slip out of captivity at the slightest chance. But far from showing any desire to fly out, they were the wariest things imaginable when I left open the door into the hall. If shy of folk in the bigness of the woods, they were not "shy" of me at all in the room. No sooner

were they dry from their bath than they began a minute inspection of their new quarters, commenting, meanwhile, in tones far from complimentary. They walked boldly to the windows and gazed into the tree tops that tapped against the panes (the windows reaching to the floor). They hopped upon the sill and pried into every cranny; they pecked at the closed doors; they scrambled along the perches, twitching off every dead leaf; they slid along the top of rolled shades and peered down behind them; they descended to the floor and gayly made the gravel fly like rain; they tweaked the oil-cloth on which stood their bath, and left not an inch of it uninspected beneath; then they turned their attention to me, sitting in the middle of the floor, on my lap a plate of scrambled eggs—(and it took all our forty-nine hens to lay one egg a day, mind you!) and hurried frantically over to see what manner of creature I might be! Scrambled egg was the daily diet of these epicures on "Deerfield Ranch," and well they knew its color! But a "womanfolk" sharing their cage—that was a new departure!

Around, and around, and around me they walked, each circling bringing them nearer, and chattering like a—well, like magpies do chatter, incessantly, loudly, imperatively, scolding, haranguing, questioning, making a furtive grab at

the scrambled egg to which I was inviting them with coaxing tones! "Come on! come on! and get something to eat. Come on! Come on!"

The first day they would only eat when I left the food in the middle of the floor. The second day they partook of it when I placed the plate by my side, but always with mandates to me, and wondering squawks. But on the third day they came hastily to me and picked at the egg when I held out the plate on my hand. Thereafter they would stand by my side, or even venture onto my knee, and eat greedily from the plate in my lap. "Maria's" caged magpie had been fierce and snapped at every one, having been subject to much teasing—these birds, positively, seemed to know I meant well from the start—and trusted me accordingly.

They seemed to be the least wild and the quickest to make acquaintance of any bird I had known.

I fell into the habit of saying as I entered, "What? Are you waiting for me?" and in "no time" they caught the words—"What? What?" "What, what, what?" greeted me instantly I lifted the latch, and, I do believe, if I had kept them a sufficient length of time, they would have said, "What? What? What you got this morning?"

Omelet and scrambled egg was the "chief of their diet," but corn bread, fruit of any kind,

meat, and old bones to pick all came into their daily living. In winter time they tear up huge nests of hornets and devour the builders with gusto! Presumably the cold has numbed the hornets. I fed them morning and evening, leaving always a bowl of food for their "between meals," but I found them light eaters.

Most beautiful birds, their black plumage showing lights of purple, violet, and green, while the snowy whiteness of their "vests," the white of their underwings and tails—long graceful appendages—gave them an air of being always gotten up for a party! Their length was just seventeen and one-half inches from tip of beak to the end of their tails.

Early in the morning they were "up and doing," I assure you. Pound, pound, pound, just over my head when dawn began to break. Want to know their occupation? Boring holes in the bare floor and jamming into them round pearl buttons! I would call up to them—"Be still! Be still, Jack!" (for I had named them Jack and Jill.) "You will wake the Master!" A few moments of profound silence, then came in loud, unearthly tones, "What? What? What?" After hearing this in endless repetition, I simply had to run up stairs, even at dawn, for they were positively so attractive I could not help it. Every day developed new traits, and, in such young birds, it

was an interesting study to see how quickly inherited traits of the whole magpie race showed themselves. They had never had a plaything given to them before—but they seized upon the first button I threw and rushed frantically away to hide it, thrusting it under the papers on the floor—until they could "excavate" the boards.

If I had not furnished them promptly with buttons, spools, a tiny round mirror, keys, crocheted toilet mats (that they dragged around in delight) and what not, I feel sure not a grain of plastering would be on the walls this day. The instant I tossed on the floor a new object, that instant they pounced upon it, hurried around the room at lightning speed seeking a place to store it. Various excavations in the floor held buttons. Between the ropes and the window sashes, also, buttons went rattling down, and soon not a window would go up without a creaking protest, if, indeed, it would go up at all! The wall paper came away readily under their vigorous peeling, but I found the birds never ill-natured, never ugly in any way. Inquisitive to a crazy degree, yes, but friendly as might be with me and the "culled help!" At night they roosted upon the apple tree boughs, but if they did not find place there before darkness fell, they seemed to have no sense of direction, or were not able to see in the dark.

Time and again I have gone up at night to find

"Jill" (she seemed ever the less quick of the two) huddled on top of the middle sash of the window, or forlornly perched on the window sill. The first time, I caught her and put her on the roost, but she fluttered so that on other occasions I lighted a lantern, and setting it in the middle of the floor, sat down myself beside it and watched her until of her own will she found the perch and went happily to sleep snuggled close up beside her "Jack."

Soon, I left the door open into the hallway, and shortly the two birds would run to the door and peer out, but it took many days ere they ventured outside it. Then it was for only a few moments at a time. At any step but mine they would dodge back into their room, seeming to feel safe within familiar walls. Later, they walked down stairs with the stiffness and precision of one "on drill." They never ventured into the lower rooms, however, seemed afraid of strange places, but would stand at the hall screen door and chat with "Jim," the huge Langshan rooster, by the half hour. His height and the size of his feet seemed ever a source of excited wonder to the two birds, and while "Jim" stared down at them and cocked his red eye wickedly, the two magpies trailed back and forth and chattered wildly, giving him "Hail" and "Farewell" with the only word in their vocabulary—"What? What? What?

What?" It was a sight to provoke laughter in men and gods! You may think when they wished to go upstairs that they flew! Not so! They would hop onto the first step and hurry to and from the banisters and wall again and again. Then they would stoop low and hop to the next step and so on to the top of the flight, where they would scurry into their own door at lightning speed—glad to be back in familiar quarters!

Left alone in the house, the birds chattered almost without ceasing. They seemed to want companionship, to hear something "doing"; but, instantly I opened the outside door, profound silence fell. Then, when my feet began to ascend the stair, I could hear the birds running to the door, and when I touched the latch—"What? What?" in sepulchral tones of welcome, for, indeed, their voices sounded all the varied tones of emotion—anger, joy, content, curiosity, fear.

Their favorite perch when I entered was on top of the opened door, and along it they would run, from end to end, following my hand with some dainty for them. They were like two children in the house, and when I took my place on the floor would come instantly running up to see what new plaything I had brought them. A marble, a bullet, a button, anything small and hard, that would roll, was their main delight, and they would chase it round and round like kittens,

fighting like cats over a certain one both might happen to fancy!

But, alackaday! When one begins to love anything too much in this queer old world one must, naturally, resign it! Every time I went into the room and watched those caged, but far from unhappy, creatures, studying the waving green boughs that sunnily swayed just beyond the glass, my heart smote me! Such a big beautiful world of out-of-doors, and those two who would so adorn it, so enjoy it, caught between four walls! It was too much for me, and so, on a day I called the curator of Kansas University. "Where can I safely free my magpies?" Not in our beautiful "Sunnyside" trees, nor yet near the park—quickly they would be captured or killed. "Down to the timber line," he said, "follow me this afternoon when I go hunting."

So I laid my hand on my trusting birds, I caged them once more in their traveling box, I baked a fine "corn pone," and I scrambled the last lay of the combined forty-nine hens, I hitched up old "Riley," and with my "culled" maid, I journeyed sadly southward with my exiles. Over roughest of untraveled roads, down below "Blue Mound," far, far away over wide fields of purpling alfalfa into the depth of lonely woods, we journeyed, two miles or more from any house, and eight miles from home, and there we alighted

and amid the greenness of "Copperhead Hollow" I set down the box. I talked long to my two dear feathered friends, who seemed almost human in their speech and action, then I broke the slats, and said—"It is certainly going to be mighty nice for you out here among these splendid cotton-woods, but I—ah, I hate to let you go! Come on, come on out!" I coaxed. They hesitated but a second, then out sailed "Jack," pioneer, trying his wide wings at last in the open, and with one long curve landed close to the sky! "Jill" was slower, but followed him at the gentle sound of my voice, "Come along out!" My heart sank! Gone for good, they were! But who could regret their fleeing! Not I, though I watched them with brimming eyes as, high up there among the green, they swung from branch to branch in wondering gladness! Then I crumbled the "corn-pone" on the fallen stone of a deserted cabin under the trees, I spread out the omelet, and I called, "Come down, come down and get some corn bread! Come down! Come on down!"

Both birds looked down, and instantly responded, "What- What? What- What? What?" flitting down and down amongst the leaves and answering my every summons.

But I had to leave them, and it did seem lonesome out there in the big woods, and I turned yearningly again, and yet again, "Good-night,

nothing will hurt you, good-night—Don't you be afraid! It will soon be morning, and then you will be glad," as they watched me, curiously, away. "What! What!" was the last sound I heard from the dimness of the woods.

The silent house! No querulous complaining as I neared it! No welcoming note when I went up the stair, no hurried steps to greet me—just the open door, and useless things! You know what I did next, don't you? I sat down on the floor and cried!

But that learned curator had said, "A tree is a tree to a bird and home is home to him in a tree anywhere!" But I knew better than that, for home is home to a bird in the same place year upon year, and human friends are the same to him on his yearly spring returning, but, as "Jack" and "Jill" were such youngsters, I could only hope they would not, amidst the verdure of Kansas woods, miss the wildness of Montana "coulees," for "Jack" and "Jill" are truly pioneers of their species in the "Sunflower State," and let us hope the winter will be kind to them, and their descendants will for long years make more lovely its flower-strewn prairies, and its woody hills.

I never had opportunity of going again to "Copperhead Hollow" to see how the birds fared, but I telephoned to various farms about for I was as frantic with anxiety as if they had been *babes* in

the wood in place of *birds,* and learned that my jolly little companions did miss me, for they had presented themselves in most friendly manner at various houses and graciously devoured "rations" from the hands of any giver. On a certain Sabbath following the flights of my birds my telephone brought me a call from a farmer's wife, a stranger, living in the vicinity of "Copperhead Hollow."

"Are you the lady who had them magpies?"

"Oh yes," I eagerly answered, "Have you seen them?"

"Sure! them two birds come on my porch this mornin' a' walkin' right up to my door jes like folks! They were that tame I fed 'em and they took the food out o' my hand! They stayed around all day and I seen 'em often, since, flyin' 'roun' 'mong the trees!"

"Oh won't you please feed them sometimes," I besought, "and make them some corn-pone?"

"Sure, I will!" came answer and, then, I leaned my head against the telephone box and cried again!

THE DAISY FIELDS

"Over the shoulders and slopes of the dune,
I saw the white daisies go down to the sea;
A host in the sunshine, an army in June,
The people God sends us to set our hearts free.

The bobolink rallied them up from the dell,
The oriole whistled them out of the wood,
And all of their singing was 'Earth, it is well,'
And all of their dancing was 'Life, it is good.'"

Our daisy field is far and away off from sand dunes. No sweet salt smell comes up from the sea calling the nodding flowers in rank and file to march down to its lapping borders. No indeed! *but* a day in our daisy field truly "sets the heart free"; free of little humdrum things, free of strife, emulation, free of petty jealousies; free of heartache, lonesomeness and unrest, for the high warm wind delicately scented by rose-pink clover blows away all ugly narrowing thoughts, and leaves in its trail the knowledge that life *is* good, and there is just one thing to do in it,—Be glad, be glad, *and* be glad.

For "eyeballs vexed and tired" this spacious daisy field provides a feast of loveliness that lasts

one like Wordsworth daffodils, through the dark of hot sleepless nights to come, when, through heavy lids, cool white visions of that daisy patch, as it must then be lying under the friendliness of star-shine and 'neath the paling light of the moon in the dawning, each flower unfolding dew-wet, pearl-white petals, and uplifting their golden hearts in aspiration and in praise, as the "star-fed Bee, the great Sun-Bee" climbs over the hillcrest, for our daisy fields lie on rolling hillsides, acres upon acres upon acres.

Torn up, plowed under, mowed down, they have sprung into life year upon year, they have spread and flourished, until, to-day, the fields are given over to them, and they run riot beneath the crooked fences to gossip with that careless roadside gypsy "Bouncing Bet." They even cross the lazy waters of the creek on wings of errant lawless winds bent on sowing mischief, and here, and here, in other meadows, and farther woodsy places gleam spots of white no larger than a pocket handkerchief. But the mischief's done. Next year you will see them wider spread, and daisy time is a *dear* time in this old village. Crowds of old folks, young folks, black folks, white folks, go out to admire, and worship, and "salaam," and be glad in the charming presence of the daisies, as, in Japan, slant-eyed

heathen rejoice annually in long and leisurely worship of the cherry-trees in blossom time.

Do not go by the winding road if you want to plunge into the heart of daisy land. Long, and weary looking, it trails its ribbony length, pallid with endless travel, up the hill shadelessly, and brings your dusty "Novena" to an end by cattle bars, which you climb over or take down according to your length of limb, and you tear up a few big-eyed daisies, or you cut with a dull-edged knife, and you gaze languidly across the expanse of this restless silver-white sea of flowers. You wade among them but a few steps, you have seen the daisy field; it is not much, after all; you are hot and tired, you impatiently start back home under a sun umbrella, and curse the fate that led you by that delusive road.

But!—*leave* the road after you cross the old white covered bridge (pronounced unsafe and laughed to scorn, poor faithful old thing, by the new structure of iron, concrete and steel, that flings itself insolently from shore to shore within a stone's throw of this old servant of the turnpike). No matter! The new bridge stands all alone in its grandeur of piers, and rocky roadbed, but about the old friend all manner of posies attest their fidelity, and all manner of lacy ferns and embroidery of curly green mosses crowd

every chink and cranny of the flagstone foundation. "Bouncing Bets" vainly shake out their crinkly petticoats, white, pink, in crowds of flower ladies that press closely to each bridge end, and tall, white sweet clover reaches up from below to the height of a man, and in the hot sun sends up its incense to the old veteran, the white bridge.

Pinkest of pink-wild roses have traveled leisurely, through the years, atop of the snake fence until a long rosy hedge of sweet-brier reaches out from the woods, tossing up protesting hands because it cannot cross over, and, amidst the tangle sits a shy brown thrush, wary-eyed, half afraid to trust me, while in the old wooden arch above her, her mate sings and sings. Everything is "doing" in the neighborhod of the old bridge. Such a companionable old thing to the wilderness of the woods!

Shadowed in the twilit coolness of the old bridge, sparrows innumerable, and of innumerable kinds, are picking grain and grass seeds dropped benevolently from the creaking harvest loads, and a tiny bluebird flits through one of many holes to her rainproof quarters in the hollow of a high-arched rafter. Colonies of tiny brown wrens are rearing their broods aloft, "feathers and moss and a wisp of hay" point out the building sites,

and, thus, amid song and perfume the old bridge is drowsing away its days.

Turn to the left at the bridge end, and climb the age-old lichen-covered fence; stumble over plowed ground where the brown earth lies a-dream 'neath waves of shimmering heat; the breeze frolics blithely through your hair, the sky is *so* blue, dazed, bewildered, happy, wholly wrapped up in things about you, you amazedly bring up suddenly against a wire fence all a-bloom with the wild grape, and you find, unexpectedly, beyond it "one mo' ribber to cross," whose silvery stretch is alive with schools of minnows, and just—too—wide to go over dry-shod. What's the odds? Shed your shoes, ditto stockings, and wade in. The water is delightfully warm, the minnows nibble gaily at your gleaming toes; the sands are golden in the depths below, the little stones imperiously demand right of way, but in a froth of mirth, and bubbles and disdain the careless waves dash against them, over them and are gone, changed from mimic rapids into the stillness of a mountain pool, on whose surface sails an infinitesimal gossamer fleet, feathery fruitage from the cottonwood trees. Naturally your footgear drops from your shoulder just in the deepest place, but a little fishing brings them up, and the sun-baked ground will dry them on your feet (if you ever ex-

pect to wear them again); and, also, there is a wide field of rosy clover to cross ere you reach the haunts of the daisies, that already lift themselves on the hillsides like mid-winter snow-drifts.

More than knee high stands the clover, and with every swish of our skirts we brush out perfume. Numberless meadow larks break into song, rising on every side, whirring before our wary feet, for we are mightily afraid lest we bring ruin to the skillfully wrought homes of these ground builders. Swinging on the swaying grasses of the fields, in early spring, were innumerable bobolinks. To-day but few have remained to nest here,—ground-made nests again. And we cannot find a one though we see the owners saucily a-tilt on tallest weeds. How pretty they are and how unusual! They have such a demure, cosy look about them! The male looks like a blackamoor, His face, its entire front of dull dead black, a real little chimney-sweep; but a twist of his active little head shows a buff cap and a broad white summer coat of linen, with white shoulder-straps. He continually tips back his head from the seed-eating he is so busy about on the low weeds, until it seems as though he were returning grateful thanks to the blue sky above him for the beautiful seed-time and for just being alive in the beautiful world.

I stalk an especial one this afternoon, around

and around, but he fears nothing, allowing me to come close, and sounding his soft cheery notes of "Twee? Twee?" and then "Twee, twee, twee?" as if questioning my vagaries. His brown mate is close hid in the grasses near to which he sings, and he has a funny habit of flying from the low twigs of the weeds down onto the ground where she is hidden. They fuss about busily for a little time, then up onto the seed stalk again he flies, not very high, quite near enough to whisper to her, and give reports of what's going on above. He repeats this action endlessly. At no time whatever have I heard him use the notes accredited to him, of "Bobolink, link, link." Always and only "Twee, twee? a pause—"Twee, twee, twee?" Among the demure bobolinks we miss today the note of color flaunted by the red-wing blackbirds that, in early spring, dashed about high in air over the fields where sojourned the bobolinks. Their shoulder straps were of brightest scarlet, and these blackbirds stand for beauty as much as the brilliant warblers that flit north in their wake.

To-day where the sea of daisies breaks against the wood-line, I find a few only of the bobolinks, hovering where nests undoubtedly are in the dead grasses, but they must be of the second setting, for the time is July, and the first wooing of the birds does not tarry for summer months.

Climb the hill, then; cannily remove a panel or two from the wood-and-wire fence (four different kinds of fences within a mile!) and creep through into the wealth of bloom. From the timber line the daisies crowd down to welcome you, a surging sea, breeze swept, changing from white to green, from green to white as it is tossed up and down by the urgence of the winds, and on its surface be-sprent with yellow stars. You may fall to your knees in the midst of them and pick and pick. You may give that up and sit flat upon the grass crushing numberless blossoms in your fall, and the daisies will sweep above your shoulders, and the harvest of posies you have picked leaves no gap. You wander aimlessly among the flowers, shaking out pollen with every step, trailing your finger-tips delicately over the restless petals, and the daisies bow, and bow, and bow before you, at your side, and close up in your wake. You have left no mark of your passing. The lightest wind ruffles the willing blossoms into rhythmic waves, that roll on as far as you can see, and they nod consentingly to the east, to the west, to the south; they swing on long stems, they twist and turn about, and dance madly to the shrill piping of the coming storm, and in the welcome rain they mightily rejoice. Their heads swing low only to lift again and look about for hints of azure among the "thunderheads" whose shadows first gave

warning of the tempest and turned their petals into gray; they shake themselves under the first sunbeam, take heart and begin the day all over in the knowledge that "life it *is* good," after all. Always just beyond where one is picking seem to be the largest flowers. 'Tis magic lure and leads over hill and hollow in all directions.

Enchanted with this royal field of white and gold which summer has brought forth, thousands of gauzy wings, purple and brown, yellow, blue, white are all aflit. Butterfly Courtiers of high degree to the Princesses who curtsey, and dance and dance again. The little hills fold upon themselves, fold and unfold, and a dell leads by flowery way to an island of green trees, an oasis in this wondrous spread of flowers.

The cattle crop the grass on the edge of fences that yet cannot stop the onward march of the daisy. No "wee crimson tipped flower" this, but a big, strong sturdy white bloom that will grace the fields for days and weeks, reproducing itself endlessly, all through the months of June and July.

But, wandering in a daisy field with wondrous happenings all about us is a chancy thing. Unseen eyes are watching us, unseen ears hear us,—the peevish chatter of the gray squirrel tells us so; and from near by a shout of laughter, a rattling chuckle proclaims what clowns we be, in the

opinion of the one who views us from the thicket. We pause in amaze and peer at the tangle of undergrowth in the woods. The tongue of him who jeers at us is by no means a soft one. It shouts, it whistles, it cries, it mocks all the birds of the air from the catbird's fretful call to the melodious notes of the gorgeous cardinal, who serenely whistles it down, and, as we hurry to find this bird of no name, he suddenly launches into the air, disclosing his identity by the gorgeous yellow waistcoat he wears—the yellow-breasted chat, than whom no greater comedian is sheltered by the woods.

Under a sky of steel blue the daisies are shutting. Twilight is falling across the meadows, but not gloom, for the night is softly irradiated from below, as from above, by the planetary system of the daisy fields, now drowsy white-capped buds responding to the light of the quiet stars. The cattle are lowing at the gates, gauzy-gray the mists drift over the lowlands, the hills have all gone to sleep, no faintest wind blows; the birds chant more and more slowly, and, the long day done we reluctantly set our feet homeward, ever turning to look wistfully back until twilight has changed to dark, and we tramp silently, happily, tiredly, with uplift of heart across the old white bridge.

AMONG THE BERKSHIRES

"Grasses entangled with shadows,
Branches that sway overhead,
Vistas down spangled meadows,
And a brook with a noiseless tread."

Across the road from "Orchard Nook" lives a very small woman who owns—a mountain! She owns "Haystack," and Haystack looms almost at her front door. I look at this small woman with deep respect. Fancy the weight on one's mind imposed by a mountain,—and its taxes! My awe is not, however, tinged with envy. For the mountains frightened me.

Declared the Dominie, "Well, you *are* a tenderfoot;" Counseled I with myself, "I *will* lift up my eyes unto the hills, from whence" *ought* to "come my help." But it was quite useless. They appalled me with their vastness,—they shut me in,—they threatened me, these high, green hills! They seemed falling on me.

Shadow, and shade, and sunlight, and tall forest trees growing out aslant in desperate effort to reach the light—"the survival of the fittest." "No," I announced, "I do not like the mountains

—they are all leaning this way. I *am* afraid of them."

Green and gracious: mysterious, also, in slender forms of light-footed deer, who gazed at us in wide-eyed wonder from the borders of the lake; alive with red squirrel and chipmunk; full of glancing sunlight from the west—even thus, they menaced me, and only the testimony of a fairly good conscience prevented me from running away.

Across the road behind our buggy sprang a doe, scarcely frightened, but skimming the stone wall like a bird, up, up the hill, and away, her plumy stump of a tail flashing "adieu," like the waving of a handkerchief. The second deer, for my hostess, in her seven years of dwelling among the hills. My first deer—after a residence of only two weeks. Judge of my luck!

This sign of companionship in the wilderness comforted me, but yet, horizon and wide star-bejewelled sky had vanished with the sea I left behind me on the shores of good Cape Cod. What matter that the sun sailed from sight in a flood of palest green? or that rippling bands of red-gold filmed cloudily above the sea of light? or that the roseate hue spread and spread to farthest east, bedecking a sky of faint blue with rolls of diaphanous pink? or that the golden splendor died into gray only to blush once more in wondrous afterglow—the stark trees of the

mountain tops a-row against the glory, the clouds above changing to ashes of rose?

Beautiful? Yes. Stupendous? Yes. Marvelous in their range on range of misty hills lapping and interlapping, folded softly one upon another—far, far away. But, comforting? Not to me. Helpful? No.

Into the hills from the sea! The immensity of difference. "As news from a far country, so is water to a thirsty soul!" I wonder if that means—the sea? The restfulness that comes from the sight of many waters? It is health; it is strength; it is healing. The sea does everything, and we look on. Tired, discouraged, we cast ourselves on the shore of the sea, and our cares drift swiftly away on the ebbing tide. Outstretching far, and far, opaline in ever changing tints, tireless in its recurrent surges; clamoring among the rocks in the wild assault of onrushing tide; whispering its apology as back and back it slides adown the shimmering sands, leaving toll of submarine life in every crystalline pool. Looking on the sea we think of the sky—its blueness, grayness, cloud-flecked or starlit, a world of glittering light—by night, by day; sea and sky, sky and sea.

Drops the sun into the water, a ball of molten metal; up reaches shining fingers of rose color, touching here, and here, and here the ceaseless

ripples into a path of fire, dancing, sparkling, disappearing, breaking forth anew and reaching to where sky and sea do meet.

In afterglow the sky swims in gold, green, pink, crimson, purple, gray, darkness; and in the east the moon marking her course with a broad silver brush, and across it swing bat-like sails.

Must one not be bred to the hills to love them? *Heimweh*—for the mountain-tops is among the weariest of "heart-sickness" when distance divides.

The yellow-haired Norwegian lassie, our little maid, weeps for her mountains and rocky fiords. "Eugènie"—the cook sighs for the hill-country of France! "François" works and plans for a little farm among the Alps where, already, has preceded him with "les enfants," "ma femme—Mariette!"

Cuddled in a hollow in the very heart of the woods on the flank of "Bald Mountain" lies a tiny cottage—a "cabin," we from the South would say. The tangled garden glows with asters, and from the small diamond-shaped panes peers an old, old face—the face of a woman of eighty-four—alone, content, serene, happy, with only birds and trees, and flowers, and the whispering companionship of the mountains. By choice she lives here, from an absorbing love of the hill-country.

Thoreau scornfully sniffs, "The man (or woman?) who wants constant communion with his fellows through the postoffice has not heard from himself in a long time!" What rare discourse, then, holds she with *her*self, this brave old lover of the hills!

Gazing at the mountains we think of them—not of the sky that arches over like a big, blue, inverted bowl. The tints and shades and colors of the forest—pine, birch—longlimbed, clean white trees,—maples and oaks, firs and aspens. There is no reflection of the kindly stars; scarce a gleam of moonlight glances into the black-green depths, and yet these mountains are full of marvel and of healing airs.

Up, and up, and up climbs the twisting, turning road, fern bordered, laurel perfumed, under interlacing boughs—up and up it goes to "Moses' Mount" with its long vista of "Canaan Valley." Or up and up, over "Bald Mountain," until Mt. Everett's cloud-capped peak lifts its head high above the ranges. Blue, and blue are the long lines of hills, sun smitten in places, rainbow spanned in others as a shimmering mist spills itself among the valleys. Four ranges of mountains lie in sight, and on their crags cling tiny villages like swallow-built nests. Above the many woodland voices among the mountains sounds always the running water of the brooks. Narrow,

troutlike streams that fall, and fall, and fall unseen often, but never unheard, full of busy, chattering gossip. Thus we came upon the "Murmuring Maid." Springs this brooklet from highest mountain-top, drip, dripping from granite crevices, ice-cold, crystal clear; creeps softly among the leaves—joins itself to other errant streams, slips among the shadows, down, and down, to fallow fields and sunlit meadows, where sweet-breathed cows come to drink. Murmurs this maid in musical tones—trills, and runs, and twinklings over its rocky bed—falling over shelving with loud thanksgivings. All the sounds of summer are outsung by this "Murmuring Maid"; the cricket's churr, the locust's hum, the ceaseless reiteration of "Katy-did," the dizzy buzz of yellow bees, ever above them is the cheerful note of the brook, insistent, eager, careless of sorrow, or woe, heartaches or joy, ever with a message of good cheer—"Be glad; be glad! be glad!"

Climb the stone wall, its crannies green with ferns, break through barring branches, spring from rock to rock across the mimic rapids, push your way along its course in all the hidden curves among ferns, and daisies, and wild blue-flags, it's worth your while. This mountain brook will teach you everything of woodland ways. You, quietly resting among the ferns, may watch the

birds come to drink; the humming-birds, who rob the ferns of their downy sheath; the cat-bird, slipping among the bushes, and mocking those unlucky enough to sing near him: the "Murmuring Maid" has secrets but will unbosom them all to one who loves her.

Of the "piny woods" bordering the "Downs" can one tell their delights! Soft foot-falls on the thick ruddy carpet of pine needles, a crowd of chick-a-dees chattering take you into communion, hopping about in interested curiosity, with many greetings of "Dee-dee, dee, dee!"

Distinct on the warm brown carpet lies a morsel of lichened bark,—blue, brightest blue, the very tint of sky and bird-wing. The pine has flung it—and I pick it up in wonder—a piece of blue bark, unseen before—by me. How they gossip, whisperingly, these gray-green pines! The sound of the sea is in their branches, the aromatic smells of Araby drift from them at every breeze; their canopy is a drop-curtain—before, beyond, and far away lie sunlit expanses of shining fields, and range on range of blue and misty mountains.

There are fern-hollows among these deep, dark woods. "Fern parlors"—where the shade is densest a ghostly group of ferns—white, skeleton-like. Where the sun ever faintly flickers, green-

est of all things are these, delicate, curling, uncurling, spreading wide their dainty forms in shades innumerable and in numberless variety. For this is their "Homestead."

OUT-OF-DOOR THINGS

"The birds their rippling songs will sing
And wooing minds their spices bring."

Suppose you are trying to sew—when all the woods are calling, "Come!" You say firmly to yourself, "No, this rainy day is just the day for darning!" and you pile your lap with detested old stockings, you push your yarn through the needle's eye, and lo! a flash of flame in the pine-tree's top! Down goes your work, and away on the wings of a crowd of warblers fly your good intentions! For that tantalizing flash was the golden breast of a Blackburnian Warbler!

"Of *a* warbler" do I say? In a twinkling the trees are ablaze with bits of color. Flit through them and away! Dear me, how the woods call! But the mists rise up, and rain comes down, and I lower my beauty-loving eyes from the tender green spring fringes of the pines to the prosy work of black socks; but the needle goes flaggingly.

Again there is stir in the pines and cedars. Away goes my work, and into play come my glasses—and that was only the beginning: for

three happy weeks, "off and on," that crowd of warblers made merry outside our windows, and what they found to eat among the pine buds I could not conjecture.

I give you the names of those in purple and gold of fine feathers upon whom we looked down from our airy windows, as often as we looked up, when they flitted to the tops above us—and it was a piece of dexterity to catch them with the glass, for their flight is so swift, so darting they change places with the same celerity and apparent inconsequence as the bits of colored glass in a kaleidoscope!

Rainy days only add a gleam to their shining coats, and they are all in holiday attire for the courting season! The Blackburnian Warbler is most gorgeously dressed of all—golden orange his breast and throat, orange striped his crown, velvety black on back and wings, with markings of satiny white. The soon-to-be wife of his is dressed somewhat in fashion as a yellow-bird, duller of breast, and with dull black wings marked with white.

Many are the black-polls, both male and female; a black-throated green warbler, pure white as to vestments, curiously yellow-marked on cheeks; pine warblers—demure little females in Quaker gray and white, while the male sports a yellow vest; a palm warbler, deep yellow of

breast with sides chestnut spotted in fashion of a thrush; magnolia warblers—a many of these—lemon-yellow of breast, with yellow rump, white feathers in tail and wings, and one of the least timid of all this crowd that enlivened the spring days in our neighborhood. Myrtle warblers, Cape May warblers, Nashville warblers, and the common black and white warblers in crowds. All of these we identified day after day flitting about in our cedars and pines in the heart of the little village. I learned later it was unusual that such birds should come into a town, or dwell there so long. In any case, we had them, and not only that, but a few of them came to the bird-table on the porch roof to taste of "light-braid" scattered there!

Just now it is October—and, flashing about in the big maples that are shaking out branch ends in all shades of crimson and scarlet, these little birds of gay feather have again come to call and are winging their way South. It's always a subject of indecision to me whether the birds care most for fair days, or days of rain; days when the trees drip moisture quietly and silently, and when you may stand for an hour in the thickets with these dainty warblers as busy about their business as the proverbial bee, picking, picking, into every conceivable cranny, seemingly oblivious of your presence, or confident you mean them no

harm, and understand your affairs as they do theirs.

A week ago, wandering up through the campus with umbrella closed, a "misty, moisty morning, when cloudy was the weather," a sudden hard pattering of apparent rainfall warned me to put up my shelter, which I did—but not a drop fell upon its cover! I put out my hand—no moisture! I put down my umbrella and turned from the path in among borders of blossoming wild asters that empurpled the underwood, and was instantly pelted with falling beechnuts!

Could anything but a snapdragon cast forth its seed with such force and celerity? They literally rained down, crisp, brown, popping from their cells, dead ripe. And what started them? A crowd of blackbirds, for once not bent on conversation, but banging away at the boughs with blows that sent down the nuts like hail.

For days the woods have been astir with migrants. This morning, in the mist and rain, a whole bunch of birds is frolicking in the tall lilacs, in and out of the big brushy heap of syringas, and tilting on the telephone lines that swing in the wind. Hot and dusty was yesterday—no birds. To-day, cool and damp, the feathered folk show with no uncertainty that soft rainy days are just as good to them in their season as days of sunshine.

A cardinal—resplendent! greedily eating the blue berries of the woodbine; black and white styles showing in warblers, and a young downy woodpecker; the russet browns pertaining to fall look freshly donned by the thrashers, and a dainty hermit thrush who balances himself eternally on telephone line! The tufted titmouse, who really stays with us all winter, seems to play at migrating, too, for he is a great "mixer," and you catch him in almost every crowd; phœbes and a wood pewee utter complaining notes, but the gathering is mostly a silent one but for the savage cry of the jay, who does not come amiss as a note in the color scheme.

The roadsides are gay with bloom. Midsummer, with its sweet-brier, is the only thing that outvies the wood-ways of October. Yellow patches of feathery goldenrod; tall asters, white and lavender, are springing and nodding from beneath hedges, and all along the road, and one goes about sniffing here and sniffing there, in vain search for something in the crisp, perfumy air that we can not name! And that reminds me of a day when I jogged on a "tipcart" through Louisiana woods, all sweet with spring life and bloom, when suddenly there floated on a cool stratum of air a strange, sweet smell.

One may think he is familiar with the fragrance from every tree and shrub when lo! in a moment

some elusive odor greets him—unrecognizable—and yet?

On every gust of wind came to us the new smell, and we ventured in among thickets of laurel and wild jasmine to run unexpectedly across what we later learned was the flower o' the wild pink clematis, tangling itself in a rosy cloud over the decaying trunk of a water-oak.

The charm of this flower is indescribable, for, though in a way all are similar, study it as long as you will, examine blossom after blossom, and no two of a thousand will you find exactly alike. Not only is it individual in this, but also in its rare perfume, and in the persistent freshness of its appearance. When, in the tropical heat, every flower in its neighborhood is a-wilt and hangs heavy-headed, half asleep, this strange pink clematis has the freshness of a dewy morning. It is called "plentiful" in the South, but in a twenty-mile ride you may, perhaps, come upon two or three of the plants—if you look sharp—not oftener.

Spring, summer, autumn—not even winter is devoid of birds, bees, and beautiful out-of-door interests. I call to mind a sudden swarm of bees last summer in our Kansas garden. Busy was I "a-hangin' up the clo's," when a mighty, rushing sound as of thunder beat upon my ears. All around and about me came a multitude armed

with shining lances—winged with gauze—the old-fashioned thatched hive had yielded up a swarm!

Too late to run, so I stood quietly but in a panic of fear wondering if upon my devoted head would hang this myriad of honey-makers. But high above me, soaring high and higher, swept the bees, weaving in and out among themselves in dizzying swirls 'way up into the blue, and then, like a shimmering silken curtain, the host folded back upon itself—back and down—like a dropping sail—to wrap its tissue around and about the lowest branch of a pear tree directly by my side.

The neighbors called, "Don't move! We'll send for old Terry! The bees never touch him!" So, perforce, and because I was afraid to stir, I watched the marvel at arm's length range.

Millions upon millions of bees formed the solid, ever humming mass, a big, brown, cone-shaped bunch that hung in the morning sunshine. What hurry, what scurry to get "old Terry"—as slow, himself, of movement as a—road engine, but, finally, across the pasture and over wire fences, hatless, coatless, nonchalant, came this old darky, who could handle the bees without gloves.

We waited, yes—but he was a little too slow—and we watched the bees slowly melt away as snow melts in the sun ere "old Terry" reached the scene of action! The flitting began at the point of the cone. Two or three bees drifted

away into the air, then a few more, slowly, deliberately, then more, then in hundreds they loosed themselves and slowly rose and, in less time than it takes to write it, the whole bunch wafted away over the fields, away and away!—to make a "bee-tree" probably for the untimely rifling of small boys, for of that swarm nothing ever was seen "no mo' "!

The big woods, even in the fall, are always full of interest, quiet though they seem, and a listening ear catches more than melancholy note of bird: stirrings of leaf, low jarring tones of insect life, patterings of small feet, crunchings of nuts by the squirrels who sit aloft—and the eye, almost unwittingly, beholds, at short distance, the movement of falling leaves, the gentle upheaving of earth mold. Beneath are flat, velvet paws pushing a passage for the blind way of the mole. A stamp of the heel, and the workman's tools are useless, for the slightest blow ends the groping life. But why should we? Debarred from gardens and lawns, here in the woods is room for everybody.

Down in the Southern woods we came across a colony of ground nests—more than a hundred of them. This is the dwelling-place of the small white heron, and among the low, swampy nests we find eggs in every stage of development, much

as I have seen them (though not quite as mixed) in a sparrow's nest.

This sparrow's nest had, first, been a squirrel's home in a treetop, but the lazy English invaders appropriated it to their own use. The winds of Heaven blew off the aforesaid "treetop," the nest was cast to the ground. It was a huge affair, showing community of life in sparrowdom. Eggs, perhaps just laid; eggs that were "pipping," eggs with young birds emerging from the shell, and a few naked, also a few half-fledged ones! A nest to be ashamed of for any bird, with its uncleanness. Not an old bird came near the nest to "rescue the perishing." Probably the "community" was already planning a new apartment house!

Among the white heron's nests a few little blue herons were making war upon the colony as if fighting for place. And how the creatures of the wood do go, each about its own business, with little regard for "what other folks think!" Witness an eight-foot 'gator, of which I was told, who lies, half in sun, half in shade (probably gorged) beneath a log in the slough. The old rotting log is crowded with nests, and, should this scaly body uprear itself, ruin and desolation would be the fate of the households above him! On the edge of the bayou was what is, probably, her nest. It contains thirty-nine eggs—our charioteer said

he counted 'em! Big, soft-looking eggs, half-buried in the sand and mud!

All that we learn of them is "darky lore"; that they will not "hatch" if put under a hen, for my friend's office-boy tried the trick on that often befooled fowl, who "mothered" her brood in approved fashion, but, at the end of her natural incubation period, arose in wrath and left them! Picture her amazement had the brood materialized! The legend that an alligator mother lies near her nest and defends it to the death is not true, for my friend has found several nests, and in every case was unable to "draw fire" from the old one.

Young mockers, down in the Southland, I have heard practicing vocal gymnastics. They sound like babies learning to talk—soft, throaty, hesitating notes, but by mating time they have a love-song ready that grows each day—and night—in length and sweetness.

Wild turkeys abound in Southern woods—birds of the earth, earthy! yet are they full of maneuver, and tricks, when they are discovered.

On our left a careless-looking nest containing eleven eggs, the owner from home. Twenty feet further on we "flush" a turkey with her brood. Alarmed, angry, she shows fight. With a mighty ruffling of her feathers she flies toward us, halts,

and glares! Like chaff before the wind the youngsters have blown into the underbrush!

We set our backs safely against a tree. The angry matron prepares for combat by first reconnoitering, drifting further and further away, and circling clear around us at a distance of fifty feet; the circle grows wider, and more wide, though her wildly troubled eye is never removed from us. Also, she never forgets to warn, unceasingly, her hidden brood. Nervously, and incessantly, she cries "Prut!" "Pr-r-rut!" "Prut!" which, being interpreted, means "Hush! Hush! Lie still! Hush!" to the youngsters, whose whereabouts she herself knows.

With the mother in agony of attendance at our heels, we pry about in the thickets, and she, by growing excitement, finally points the way to the hiding-place. When we are "burning up," as the children say, and yet can not find, we drop among the high ferns, securely hidden. After careful pondering of matters comes my lady, close and closer, a-"tiptoe" to see "what's doing."

"Prut? Prut?" inquiring, suspicious. Then she spies us! Into the air she sails, high over our heads, landing in a tree. Then we hide in the wild grapevine, and wait. Stealthily she returns, alights, and walks quite near to us—unseen.

"Coast is clear!" was what she thought, for,

with exultant "Pr-r-rut," she haled from all directions, in about thirty seconds, every single chick and child, gathered them round her in a precious bunch, counted them—I think—and bundled them off before her into places where stupid "humans" could not possibly follow, tossing back a note of victory over her shoulders!

A NIGHT IN THE OPEN

If you have ever watched, through the long twilight, the going-to-bed of the birds, you know that never, by any chance, does a bird come quietly and settle himself down at the first impulse. He comes, and he goes. He flits in and out among the leaves where his nest may be, settling himself sentinel fashion as closely as possible to the mate who covers the eggs or the young birds that are his; but he does not stay settled. The instant milord arrives, milady slips like a sprite from her nest—a little exercise of weary wings must be hers ere the long hours that will intervene before the dawn. Thus deserted, the male follows her to the edge of the garden—my garden—from which, evidently reprimanded, he flits back, a silent sentinel until the return of his partner, when away he darts on swift wings.

Again and again this performance is repeated. It is purely an act of exercise or of joy to be on the wing, for as darkness falls there is no way of seeking provender, and nestlings themselves long since have gone to sleep. There is no such

clamoring for food as, in the daytime, greets each return of the old ones.

Principally, from my porch seat, I have watched the night-keeping habits of catbirds, blackbirds, thrushes and cardinals, who dwell among the vines and in shrubby places. After the lots have been drawn for "seats"—or perches, I should say —from the first homemaking of the proprietors until the last they keep them unmolested. Thrushes, catbirds, cardinals—even a robin (though sometimes he is quarrelsome)—I have found all nesting and sleeping in community of life, under the broad-spreading shelter of a patriarchal syringa bush. But year after year I wondered why the umbrella trees held no single bird home.

Last summer for the first time, to my delight a thrush made her home under the broad green leaves; but she held it with difficulty, and I then saw the reason why the umbrellas had been passed by. Watching the homemaking of my little guest in cinnamon color, I learned that umbrella trees are the finest roosting places imaginable, and the securest of shelter in sleepy time for every bird under the sun. Such quarrelings! Such bustlings! Such driving each other in and out with angry notes of war! Such surprise at sudden invasion of territory so peaceful by day as was endured by my homemakers at eventide; and such valor

as they showed in defending their hearthstone! Blackbirds, jays, robins, catbirds, one and all fled as if the witches were after them, for no matter how lightly they settled on the outer branches of the tree, instantly they were routed. So thick was the canopy of palmlike leaves that only by their tremulous motion could I trace the passage of the little brown bird to her nest. On the tip end of an outer branch she invariably alighted, entirely hidden by the foliage, and I, looking from the porch, would follow her progress by the green undulations as she struck branch after branch in her ascent.

Forcibly ejected from one tree, the birds in this old garden of ours found shelter in a second umbrella tree on the south side of the house, and wrangled their way to rest each night of the summer, disputing, scolding, flying in and out—but in the end hiding away in sleepy content all the long night through.

February sent a first robin to my windowsill, where he established himself, dog-in-the-manger fashion, eating suet until satisfied and then cuddling against the window pane, fighting angrily at the winter residents in feathers who had been guests at my board for months. I presume he felt warm, sheltered against the glass; and was waiting until he once more had appetite, but his size, as well as his presumption, created consternation

among all the birds who strung themselves along the wire fence—a hungry little "bread line" in feathers! They were positively afraid of this arrogant fellow in brown and red! Every single morning found him sitting on my sill. Many mornings, also, I opened my window, wrapped myself up in a shawl and sat beside him with my own breakfast, while he ate not alone what was his but the share of every other bird who fluttered about in envy.

My second real friend among the birds last year had a start in life far from propitious. I never saw his nest or his "folks." He was, apparently, born without relations of any kind, and had started out to forage for himself at a tender age.

Scarcely had he tumbled out of some secure old nest to the top of the lichen-covered "snake fence" when the gray-green eyes of Marcus Aurelius sighted his pin-feather coat of blue.

Proud of his skill, Marcus brought the little bird all aquiver, just as he brought mice, and crouched, growling, at the feet of my little neighbor across the way, expecting praise, but receiving cuffings. That was Marcus's one fault—he would not distinguish birds from mice.

The little neighbor, tearful and distressed, came across the road bringing the young fledgling to the "Bird Lady" out under the trees.

"He's all numb," she wept; "he's cold; he can't move." But he had only undergone a hard squeezing, so we warmed him with our hands and held him close and were soon rewarded with stirrings of life.

He opened upon us a pair of round, dazed black eyes, then the little sticks of legs began to twitch, the broad yellow mouth gaped widely, exactly as if he were awaking from a good nap, and soon we had in our hands a lively little bunch of feathers.

How my small neighbor danced for joy! But she would not take him home again. "You take care of him! You take care of him!" she begged. So I added him to my six motherless young rabbits fed from a bottle and a wee chicken hatched at odd moments by a dozen odd hens from a nest egg, and fed him on cracker and milk when suppertime arrived.

Pending the getting of my own supper, I hid him safely on the inside edge of a low-down hole in the twisted apple tree where some chickadees had hatched their brood. He could not fall out, neither could he fall in, and, as yet scarcely fit for effort of his own, I knew he was tolerably safe. When dark fell I put him among the long dewy grasses and left him.

To my amazement he did not flutter away, but in the morning was stronger and had perched

nonchalantly on the high back of an old arm chair that stood out in the grass, looking a veritable owl with his tousled feathers and unblinking eyes. He made no resistance as I gathered him up for his breakfast, and promptly consumed a surprising amount of cracker crumbs.

Back on his chosen perch he complacently "viewed the landscape o'er," turning up an inquiring eye at the waving branches and, again, picking at his pin feathers as though thoughts of flight were buzzing in his brain. Hourly he gathered strength, venturing from chair to bench, from bench to chairback, to gather himself up, owl-fashion, and stare.

By midafternoon he had hopped and fluttered as far as the drinking pan. Much he admired his own reflection in the water, flirting it about and over him until, leaning too far, he fell wholly into the pool! Deep for larger birds, for him it was a drowning proposition, and had I not been keeping an anxious eye open for his safety here would end his story. But I ran and fished him out, dried him as best I could and set him back on his safe old perch. "Every two hours feed!"—that's the rule for young babies, and I followed it with the fledgling, but at 5 o'clock, lo! he had found a "foster mother."

Two old jays came studying him curiously. He sat looking indifferently at them as they flew

about and then came down beside him, evidently saying, "Shall we or shall we not?" When I approached with cracker and milk in hand it settled the question promptly, and instead of thanks for my charity such a berating as fell my way you never heard!

No matter; I was satisfied. The baby had fallen in with relatives of his own kind, and in a trice, was gobbling down bits of earthworms with gusto. The meal ended, he fluttered on shaky wings after the old folks over into the pasture.

In the evening my small neighbor came running across the lawn to make a call upon me among the trees. A wide mellow pathway of moonlight creeping nearer and nearer in the garden suddenly revealed to us on the very tip end of a broken branch that lay on the grass a tiny, no-headed bird. The aimless little wanderer had drifted home again! How we scampered across the grass, softly and silently as might be, to greet him; and how we dropped down about him in an admiring ring, and laughed at him, and praised him, there alone, sound asleep, and said: "Brave boy, to be out here alone in the scary dark!" I laid a soft finger on his feathers and out popped his head from under his wing, while two staring black eyes opened roundly; but he did not "uncuddle" himself, remaining just as he was, a plump, serene little bunch of feathers. We talked to him, and

petted him, and occasionally patted him quite gently on the back. He never stirred nor winked, but looking rather bored, presently tucked his head down under his wing and left us to stare at him as long as we chose.

For him night was the time to sleep, and he wasted none of it. I called upon him at 12, at 2, to find him immovable and soundly napping in the light of a moon that was like day. At earliest dawn he was still precisely as I had left him, all snuggled up in his feathers, not a sign of any head to him, and even when the birds were piping all about him he still slept on.

But by daylight he was broad awake and making his toilet in great shape—picking at his few feathers and fluffing himself out to make the most of his scanty raiment, and standing first on one foot, then the other, as if a trifle in doubt as to their ability to "hop."

Again, when I drew nearer, the foster mother swept through the air from some place of concealment and notified him that I was not the person to be trusted—to follow *her;* and in short flights she finally carried him away, as lively looking a bird baby as one would hope to see—and quite as though he had not within two days escaped death by land and water and all the powers of darkness!

I waved him farewell as he hopped and flew

out of sight and got no reward for my pains except discourteous remarks from his parents. I have often wondered since if he were deaf and dumb; for not a sound or a chirp did he make during his entire visit.

SNOW-TIME

"Out of the sobs of the winter's storm
The leaves of spring-time grow,
And behind the drifts of the apple bloom
Are drifts of whirling snow."

When I arose and ran to my window to see what was doing among the birds, just before the sun came up this morning, the sky all pink and saffron above a world all silver-pink 'neath the marvel of the snow,—the feathered folk await on my "bird-board" fastened to the eastern window-ledge would have moved to laughter other than bird-lovers. A row of damp beruffled tramps surlily awaiting rations!

Yesterday my boarders consumed half a loaf of bread, a quarter of a pound of crackers, a pint of sunflower seed, a lot of pecans, half an ear of popcorn, half an ear of yellow corn, two handfuls of peanuts, several large pieces of suet, some bits of "wienerwurst," and a little oatmeal! So, you may know that by night "the cupboard was bare." Feeling sure that long ere I was astir the birds would be on hand, at nine o'clock last evening I swept the board clean of snow and laid out

their breakfast. In the night more snow fell, however, and hid all provisions from sight, and each "dive" made by any bird into the snow was like fishing in a "grab-bag" at a fair, or like the haphazard luck of the cats at Wood's Hole who sit a-row on the beach, and, as the tide sweeps to their feet, and recedes, each one puts out a paw and draws in a tiny fish, or does *not* draw it in—as the "fisherman's luck" may prove!

I thought of those patient cats when I saw that row of waiting birds! Heading the line at one end of the board on its protecting edge sat a big red-bellied (Guinea) woodpecker. A soft, warm gray his breast, and his head a gleam of scarlet against the snow, even his eyes hold cheerful color of red. Next a-row came two bluejays in radiant coats of blue and white; then two sparrows; then a Carolina wren, in cinnamon brown, who is wintering here, and makes free of my hospitality; crowded next—only the little white and black head of him, his shoulders and two tiny, desperately clutching feet showing above the board—was a small, downy woodpecker; and, "knee deep" in snow, stood the cardinal in as gay and brilliant color apparently as he shows in mating time. Seats were all taken! And the guests, much fluffed out as to feathers, and low cuddled down to keep their feet warm, each and every one making occasional dives into the snow

for the prize of a grain of corn or a bit of suet.

I watched, and laughed, and concluded it was time for me to help out the promise that "All things are ours" if we "with patience wait for them," so I opened the window, again swept the board, and, with chickadees darting under my hands, and a titmouse eating crumbs as fast as I threw them, I spread anew the table, closely watched by a contingent arrived from the cedars and settled on the porch rail—the female cardinal, a few more sparrows, a golden-winged woodpecker, and a "hairy."

My bird-table is very primitive. It has no sheltering cover, it has no perching places, no old stumps at the corners with knot-holes to be explored, or stuffed with nuts—not any of the things a bird-lover's board ought to have—but it's a good exponent of what can quickly be done in the way of attracting and helping to keep alive the feathered folk we all so love—or ought to.

Let me see! I think it is only about six weeks since I put out my bird-board. The winter has been so "open" the birds needed little help. Fully a week my board tempted before a bird ventured to it. Then one titmouse came—then two—then a crowd—then the chickadees; but never a sparrow at all, at all! Then I began to keep "tally" of the numbers, and the varieties, and in a short time my different "nationalities" had reached

seven—then on the day before Christmas, the day of our first snow, they mounted to eleven. It takes the snow to rush the birds to folks' window sills!

To-day, January 8th, the mercury four below zero, I congratulate myself that I (country-bound) went into the town yesterday "to get my poor birds a bone" (which they enjoy picking), and a loaf of bread—of which they have already, noontime, eaten half! Sunflower seeds they love best of all. Next to that comes bread—soft, freshly baked bread—but let it get wet and "soggy," my birds will not touch it! It can just lie there, and dry and get hard, for all o' them! And, in compassion, I throw it away finally and give them things they do like. Perhaps I spoil them. Then they like birdseed, hemp seed, millet, etc.

The cardinals for a long time glared askance at the common feeding board. Like true aristocrats, they would stand warily on the porch railing, or stay half hidden in the cedar and watch the mob at the board, neither complaining nor envying evidently, but just looking on and wondering whether or no they would or they could join the club. By the half hour he would sit on a branch nearly touching the porch, and watch the other birds. He was hungry—I knew it—so was she; and, as I looked, I often saw him gather from the

ground below the porch the "crumbs from the rich man's table," and retire to the roof of the back porch, outside my west window, and there regale himself. He sleeps in the thick cedar, does that cardinal, and his wife in the thicket of syringa bush below. The last thing at night I hear his sleepy "T'chip!" for he turns in early these short days, coming by 4:30 to his sleeping apartment, and the first thing in the dawn his coat of cardinal red is ablaze among the dark green of the branches. The big red-bellied woodpecker (such a beauty!) is the shyest of my birds. Sometimes I wonder is his hearing extraordinarily acute! He cannot always see me when he comes, hidden behind the half transparent curtain hangings, but *I* can see *him* ever turning his head, on the watch for trouble; and let me move the slightest in the world, by shadow or by sound he takes warning and is gone.

Presently, however, the cardinal concludes he will join the circle, and daily, sometimes hourly, he stands, a thing of beauty and delight, on my bird-board, and cozily and comfortably eats his meals. No haste, no hurry about his movements; he eats with appetite and enjoyment, and his black mask and red bill are sometimes a-drip with suet, as, indeed, is shown on the faces of all the birds.

The Carolina wren is my smallest guest, no

whit afraid of others four times her size, and you'd be surprised to see how peaceable they all are in the stinging cold, and everything snow-covered. I put out water in saucers—it freezes "in no time"—but I see the birds eat the snow, so nature teaches them how to take care of themselves after all.

Still, they are not a silent crowd. Here is my list to-day, and, while I only name you the kinds, I assume that many birds of the different kinds visit the board—I'm afraid to say how many times a day. I will count for just one hour, and you can multiply that by six, say, six hours a day for feeding, and I can safely say, hardly a sparrow an hour.

First, cardinals; then jays, red-bellied woodpeckers, downies, hairies, flickers, nut-hatches, titmice, Carolina wrens, juncoes, sparrows, and how eagerly I scan every brownish gray bird, hoping he may bear upon his wings the scarlet tips like bits of sealing-wax that would denote him to be the Bohemian waxwing. At home, in the old house, some years ago, the winter brought us many of these handsome fellows, but this year I have not seen one.

I have heard of robins about on the outskirts of the town, but so far none has visited my board.

Last year a fine plump robin made *too* free of my windowsill, showing pugilistic proclivities,

drove away every smaller bird who came near. He waxed fatter and fatter until his obesity caught the attention of passers-by who said, "Well, you've got the biggest robin I ever saw!"

There is also a Swainson warbler who has been a rare guest among my birds this winter. He, too, is trying a Northern winter, and is as cozy and domestic-looking as our little house wren, whom I have forgotten to mention.

As for notes and songs, we have had a little of these "off and on" all the late months, until the sudden drop of last week has silenced the song. The notes we still hear, even in snow-time. The jay's notes, harsh and strident, are not unwelcome; also the "T'chip" of the cardinal we hear every day, a promise of spring,—and a song of spring I have heard him whistle all through last December.

The nut-hatch talks low—to himself apparently —commenting on ways and means with much cheerfulness, nonchalant to a degree! And has little fear in his heart! He comes and goes freely as I put out his food, and wastes no time looking about him, or in the window to see if there is prospect of his being disturbed at his luncheon.

The chickadees never lose their notes, and pipe to us as merrily in frost-time as in blossom-time— "Dee-dee-dee!"—flitting and darting about in

jerky fashion, and with a great idea of their own importance in the scheme of things.

The Guinea woodpeckers talk little, except to question fearfully — "Is-anyone-there?"—or a protesting squawk from the porch rail if anyone *is* there in plain sight, thus preventing their stay. No other woodpecker hesitates, and their notes seem only notes of satisfaction or of thanks.

The notes of the titmouse are cheery, like the cardinal's, somewhat, and he is an inveterate talker.

As to what the different birds prefer as diet, I can hardly tell you. Every bird seems to try everything on the board in succession. The birds with the tiniest, most delicate feet take the nuts; cracked, but unshelled pecans; peanuts in the shell, walnuts unshelled, and, holding them beneath the small claws, hammer away at them for dear life, and I watch and wonder, time and again, that the sharp bill does not pierce the feet instead of invariably hitting the nut. I have seen the nuthatches perch on the edge of the swinging half-shells of the cocoa-nuts, that I fill with cracked nuts, and flirt out of the nut the large shells one after another that they may find shelled fragments of meat that require no effort on their part to get! And I, astounded, cry out: "Well, of all things, *that* is the limit!"

The hour is up. I have been counting the guests at my board for one hour of the day—half past eleven to half past twelve. They number just eighty-one, and of five different varieties. This, too, at noon, when birds have been feeding all morning.

Don't you think it seems worth while for each of us to feed the birds in winter? Not alone for their sake, but for ours?

Who will take care of our fruit trees all summer if we let them starve? Who will make gay the dark days of winter? Who will make glad all the "shut-ins"?

Add to these birds one more, a most unusual winter guest, but one who lords it mightily over the home-folks—a big purple grackle!

Having arrived, from *somewhere,* he remained until full summertide, iridescent, splendid in the sun. Was I believed, do you think, when my story of "Snow-Time" reached uptown folks? Not a bit of it! Not until a-many came out to see! Among the many a certain "doubting Thomas" of clerical persuasion, who, convinced, looked disgustedly at my bird-board, and delivered himself thus:

"Well! I just wanted to *see,* and I wonder what it is in your old clap-trap (woman's carpentry) "bird-table that brings such hordes of birds!"

I don't know myself! But isn't there an old belief—if one *thinks* four-leaf clovers one finds them? So, perhaps, I "think" birds, and that brings them?

WHAT'S IN THE MAKING OF A NEST?

"Feathers and moss and a wisp of hay."

If birds of different feathers have different habits, different notes, different song, how diversified also are the materials of which they make their nests, and how interesting! Though tradition tells us a robin delights in a seemly structure plastered with mud, why does she show from time to time not alone a tendency to decoration of that seemly structure, but also a laziness akin to the cow-bird (who makes no nest at all!), when she uses year upon year the same old home, adding superstructures of mud and twigs, until having reached overhanging eaves above her nest, she is positively compelled to make a new one close alongside, for the building site evidently suits her to a "T"?

Nearby another robin (it may be one of the old robin's daughters) has selected a most unusual location—at the parting of an immense maple trunk into two huge arms. There is not room between them for any kind of a nest, so in the depression where the branches separate there

has milady established herself, the nest plastered against the side of the tree almost as a swallow builds—an open invitation to any passing schoolboy, and not twelve feet from the ground!

Then, why do so many birds imitate one another in their selection of material, departing from old established custom to the exciting experience of the new?

Years ago we began experimenting with materials for bird use, soon inducing the robins to progress from strings and cords to all manner of "carpet-rag" strips, and watched, with dismay, their dexterity in purloining dainty bits of laundry in the way of lace and handkerchiefs, from off the sunny grass, quite regardless of size, just so its weight was not too much to debar its carrying aloft by the power of brown wings!

Our cardinals, using always, heretofore, twigs, rootlets, pieces of paper (the latter invariably, find your nest where you will), follow not the robins in the use of rags, but, with as beautiful ideas in their haughty heads as they are themselves beautiful of feather, they choose with much daintiness the threads of snowy-white with which we draped the arbor hung with blossoming grape.

Followed the cardinals, then, the orchard orioles, then the dashing dandy in black and orange, milord Baltimore, whose wind-swung cradle was soon stitched together with long,

strong threads of cotton, and of rose-colored silks and flosses, and a many bird-feet tangled and untangled themselves so often in their attempts to put the new material into place, that I trembled in fear of a tragedy!

Inherited tendencies are queer things, even in birds. Mourning doves built on the ground "once upon a time" (or their ancestry did), but have "kept up with the procession," and are now tree-builders. The first nest of our doves was built high in a tree; the second the same season was always lower, as if their interest flagged in the matter, and "any old place" would do when one was a little worn out with domestic cares. Or, as if, having tested our friendship and the dangers of the place, she felt more confidence in us. Usually her first home was in a "thorn tree" and its safe protection, for nothing but what went on wings could possibly molest. A poor excuse for a "home" is that structure of rootlets and twigs on which a dove lays her pearly eggs, and I was amazed at even her imitativeness when she carried from the ground a strip or two of rag for its further "furnishing"!

Convenience of material may (does) influence a bird in its selection, but there is small doubt that a love of beauty, and the skill of craftsmanship enters into their nest building. So much of the

work is not for simple use—the lichened nest of the "ruby-throat" (only he doesn't make the nest, and his little wife is gray); gnat catchers also decorate the outside of their nest with lichens; others arrange a lining to the nest in form of beauty.

Down South among palmettos, in live-oaks, among shrubby growth of all kinds, are to be found strangely-made nests, and many departures from conventional ways of bird-land. Hot as it is you will find the stuffy homes of woodpeckers provided with bits of raw cotten stolen from the "bolls." Even the "towhee," a ground building bird (for whom there may be some excuse as to dampness), amidst her bits of bark and leaves will thrust pieces of hemp (if near a levee) and shreddy bits of wool.

Inherited tradition makes the hardy bluejay feel the necessity of heavy bed covering, and he quite often stuffs the crevices of his house (shackly old thing it is!) with wool or cotton.

In a syringa bush yesterday a long white piece of cloth (at least a foot and a half in length) betrayed the nest of a woodthrush holding three blue eggs. It was not the least use in the world, but there it hung, tucked in the side of the nest by the weakest attachment. The little cinnamon-colored owner, who "Tir-o-lee"ed to me in plain-

tive questioning, surely thought it a thing of loveliness which she must possess—and I assured her I wouldn't tell!

The shrike is said to line her nest with downy feathers of her victims—but once get a bad name and all sorts of stories are told; so don't let's believe she is so heartless.

The long gray Spanish moss mistily draping trees in the Southland is used in the nest-making of many birds that breed there. Last week, in a park, I ran across the nest of some imported duck (whose name eludes me just now), but who, with the usual sacrificing care for its young shown by every mother-bird, had plucked her breast clean of its snowy down, and made a nest of great beauty. As she sat eying me, and wondering at my insolence, the soft feathers fluffed up about her in rolls, and she was in the coziest place imaginable—a broad seat about five feet from the ground just where the great trunk of the tree divided and spread itself out in fine, huge-spreading branches. How she gets her young ones to the ground without accident I do not know, but presumably she carries them on her back.

The family of chickadees that saw light (twilight) in the apple tree last summer, in our garden, had been found, warmly brooded on a bed of down—soft feathers, pieces of fuzzy stuff that looked like plant material (got from I don't know

where), while the mercury out-of-doors had ranged anywhere from 102 to 108 degrees! Ancestral tendencies again, when chickadees came down to us on the edge of the ice-wave.

Baskett tells us of a "bird of the Sandwich Islands who, straying into the crater of volcanoes, builds her nest of spun glass, and so should not throw stones at anybody." Another bird we have all read of is said to have constructed her nest of fragments of mainsprings and hairsprings in watches. Needless to say it was a Swiss bird, and lived in the vicinity of factories. The pressure of circumstances again.

When our cardinals built in our garden after they first used the thread, they invariably used it, for it was always forthcoming, you may be sure. When, by chance, they built at my neighbor's place they had no thread (there was none to have), so, as usual, twigs and sticks, and bits of paper (invariably) must serve the purpose. But let them return to us and without hesitation they again enthusiastically used the thread.

At Wood's Hole, on Cape Cod, I found many rare nests. A crab-apple tree stood, a huge bouquet of pink and perfume, beneath my window; below sang the blue sea; 'long shore, storm-tossed, lay a rippling line of sea-moss, sun-whitened. Why look further for material? So Madam Robin made good her foundation, amid

petals of apple-bloom, with treasures "cribbed" from the sand. She piled her chosen nook seemingly "cram full"—but when the rains came she managed to plant on top of the cushiony foundation a few stout sticks, which she plastered with mud, finishing it all with mossy adornment, and yet more: It is a beautiful moss (long, long strips of seaweed it really is), thinner than paper, and wavy through every line.

On the road to "Falmouth Heights" we passed beneath trees holding other nests. Notwithstanding much ridicule by friends I insisted upon having them (it was in October), though they were far, far beyond my reach.

"Drive this 'one hoss shay' under the tree," I said, reasonably, "and I'll borrow a rake from that house. I'll climb on the seat and reach it."

Scandalous! No Yankee, in conservative Yankeeland, borrows of another Yankee unless they are introduced! But, with the manners of my country, the "wild and woolly West," I hailed a small boy in a garden, and besought him to "bring me a rake," which he did, very willingly, and I secured the nests, and left him the happier by a nickel or two!

One was the nest of a robin, a real prize in the way of bird architecture, for it was almost wholly made of sea-weed, a trifle of mud only for lining and to hold the young ones "in"; white

crinkly sea-weed hung far below the bottom of the nest; sea-weed twined it round about; sea-weed capped its rim high, and if you can imagine this when it was "new" in early spring, snow-white, almost, you can see just how pretty it must have been. By October it was gray—light gray, whitish gray.

The third nest was the nest of a white-eyed vireo, usually a clumsy structure of bark and leaves, but in this case was an exquisite bundle of white sea-weed (or moss), with sticks and strips of brown grape-vine bark mingled together with it; and the nest itself lay in the center of it all, such a "comfy" sort of place, such a soft bed for young birds! A member of the Agassiz school of science on the Island of "Penikese" is yet living at Wood's Hole, a busy worker of these days for the "Smithsonian" at Washington, Captain Vinal Edwards, who told me that on that Island, and on others, every bird which nests there makes its home often entirely of sea-weeds and mosses, "for it is very plentiful," he added, "and in fact, there is nothing else!"

SOCRATES

"Frowning, the owl in the oak complained him
Sore, the song of the robin restrained him.
Wrongly of slumber, rudely of rest."
—Sidney Lanier.

Socrates was in trouble—the result of not having kept to his long-established custom of sleeping in the daytime. In the late afternoon something had stirred him out of his leafy coverts in the dark wood—probably the robins—and thus rudely awakened, he had flopped heavily from tree to tree, foraging for his supper, and had finally landed in a maple adjacent to a thick woodbine, just then beginning to receive its evening tenants, the sparrows. In the golden-leaved maple he sat—great, brown Long-Eared Owl, much at his ease, but with watchful, blinking eyes that, half blind in the light, even yet saw quite enough to locate and pounce upon his prey when he got a chance.

All owls have a way of fluffing out their feathers and making themselves appear as much as possible a part of the tree-trunk, and so long at a time will they remain motionless, it seems as if they themselves were deceived.

The small, active neighbors of Socrates were much disturbed by his sudden appearance, and with a curiosity that proved fatal to one of them, a brisk little chipping sparrow, they circled nearer and nearer to him in his immobility, until suddenly there was a swift plunge from out the maple and in a trice Socrates had captured a prize and was back to his perch, holding in his beak the injured bird, quickly assailed by the outraged horde, and his round, yellow eyes stared in amazement at his tormentors, as he slowly turned his head from side to side, the bird yet in his mouth. Socrates was vastly disconcerted and ruffled like an angry cat, glaring viciously at the assailants he dimly saw, but budging never an inch. Every moment we expected to see him fly away, but he evidently feared to try carrying his supper and was reluctant to leave it. For many minutes he endured all manner of insult from the sparrows, who flew in his face, tweaked his feathers, snapped at his eyes —bright and shining marks—and scolded and berated him soundly, until in sheer despair he dropped his prey to the ground beneath, and with an angry snap of his beak and a wailing "Hoo—hoo!" rose into the air and sailed away to the thick woods.

That was the very last we saw of Socrates, but not by any means the first. In the early days of his youth, before he knew better than to go

dozing about in the day-time within plain sight, an easy mark of two small boys, he had been captured by them along the bank of a creek, and presented to the writer.

The morning of his advent in the household was full of pleasant surprises. He was interested in his new surroundings, and submitted fairly well to being held in the hand or on a finger and occasionally stroked, though at times he did snap savagely, little as he was—a very baby of an owl, downy and soft and gray, but with an inscrutable look in his yellow eyes which raised the question whether he had not come into existence with the Pyramids.

In his youth he was more like a fuzzy chicken than anything else, and we were greatly surprised and delighted when as time went on he showed symptoms of having long ears. We could hardly believe we had really in our possession a Long-Eared Owl, a species much more rare about here than the Screech Owl or Barn Owl.

When he was held in the hand he was comparatively quiet, but once let him feel himself quite free, as he did when we perched him on an iron bracket, and away he would fly across the room, blindly alighting on anything or in any place, and leaving behind him a cyclonic track. A delicate china cup he shattered to atoms by alighting on its edge in his first flight. On his sec-

ond tour of observation, down went a vase of Bohemian glass, and two tiny bisque figures danced gaily to the floor as his clumsy wings brushed them *en passant,* he himself gazing at the ruin as one would say, "Now whoo-oo did that? It never was I?"

Still we kept him, his nonchalance captivating our hearts. For many weeks and even months he required to be tied to his perch with a stout string, a string long enough to allow of his making short flights. As he grew larger, a light chain was put about his foot, as he showed marvelous facility in tearing the string apart. He soon learned to know us, and of one person—a boy—he became especially fond.

His favorite diet was mice and grain, and it was not difficult to supply him from neighboring barns. His choice of locality was a wide window-seat, and here in the long spring days and in early summer he would sit alternately dozing and gazing gravely down into the street, over into the campus or into the elms in front of the window, with a "Won't you walk into my parlor?" look at the smaller birds who nested there.

He grew quite tame and acquired a number of funny tricks. One of his favorite jokes was to pull the pen or pencil from the hand of anyone who sat near him writing, with his hooked beak, drop it on the window-sill or table, and then step

over it back and forth, again and again, untiringly and with much dignity.

He was a great inspiration for all literary efforts, was Socrates! With the wisdom of apparently uncounted ages in his square, fluffy head, he never failed to respond when appealed to. If you laid down your pen, weary, tired, not knowing what to say next, Socrates would gravely remark, "Goo-oo-ood!" and you'd quickly straighten up, run over the manuscript, and conclude it would touch the heart of your publisher after all, and that Socrates was a wise old bird.

He would willingly sit and gaze at you by the half-hour, unwinkingly, while you sounded the depths of knowledge in his ears; but it apparently required only a short five minutes for him to know one's mental limits!

When summer days came on, the plumage of grayish white gave place to the dress of maturity, a pale buff thickly mottled with brown, not less beautiful. With advancing age Socrates showed almost the intelligence of a parrot. He could do almost anything but talk. When the step of the boy he loved was heard on the stair, he was instantly broad awake, and evinced his delight by awkward bowing or dancing as his friend came toward him. Sometimes the boy would extinguish him beneath a golf-cap, which always drove him wild with fear, but he never resented it, invariably

submitting to petting and conversation on its removal. If he was not noticed in any way, he quickly called attention by a chuckling noise in his throat, long drawn out, or by picking at the sleeve of any one near him. The Cat Owl or Long-Eared Owl has also a mewing cry, more often heard from him than the hoot of other owls.

Chimney-swifts nested in the wide old chimney of the room occupied by our bird, and sparrows filled the woodbine, but they took good care to keep out of his reach in their circling flights and wary alightings near his window. The other birds—jays, cardinals, cat-birds, and many besides—studied him at first with respectful attention, but lost interest when they found he could go no further than the window.

A restful person to have about, was Socrates—always calm, always unruffled, always gravely patronizing to the world he had known since time immemorial, and always, by his superior demeanor, moving his friends to laughter. On warm, pleasant days he was allowed the liberty of the trees in the garden, thus learning that his chain might be unfastened and sometimes taking advantage of it, as once when he hied himself away to the quince tree, where, like Jack's giant, he "smelled the blood of"—not a British subject, but of true-blue American citizens in the shape of young jay-birds. On a crotch below the nest

stood the big, bushy brown owl, when noise of battle brought us to the door, and above him fluttered the two old jays, squawking in wild rage and occasionally snatching at his rumpled plumage or swooping before his big eyes. Freighted as he was with his chain, it would have been impossible for him to catch them, and, after submitting to their badgering for a time, during which the young ones joined their cries with those of their parents, excitedly thrusting their heads over the edge of the nest, Socrates concluded that discretion was really the better part, and beat a retreat to the ground, scudding over the grass with tucked-up feathers, as if to keep his skirts clean!

When Fritz, the canary, shook his rippling notes on the air, Socrates listened, entranced. Perhaps it was the æsthetic part of his nature; perhaps the carnal.

When the hottest days of August came, he drooped and grew moody, was cross if touched, and forgot or refused to perform his old tricks. Cool, dim woods were calling to him, and finally we set him free. Not realizing his privileges, he hung about the house for a day or two, coming when called, but finally sailed away into the campus. At intervals he returned to his window, even coming inside, and later he came at twilight and perched in the trees before the house, mewing

for half an hour at a time. We thought him home-sick. After the encounter with the sparrows he returned no more, probably reserving his depredations for young wood-birds, captivity not having cured him of his cannibalistic appetite. Sparrows we would not argue about with him, but when it came to song-birds, we felt inclined to administer discipline.

Young birds learn very early to fight in their own behalf their natural enemies—hawks, owls and cats—and, following the example of their parents, will boldly pursue the would-be robber—not unsupported, however, by the parent bird, who will get behind them and shove them toward the assailant. Also the mother will fly at the enemy and back to her timid young ones again and again, as if she would say, "See how I do it!" Sometimes when she leaves them the nestlings turn and turn, but the lesson is repeated until fighting tactics are thoroughly understood. In fact, nearly all birds except the dove, who always seems helpless in a case of danger, will soon learn to make a vigorous fight for themselves, taught by their elders.

I witnessed an interesting skirmish that took place one summer day in an old orchard on my grandfather's Massachusetts farm, between a Barred Owl and a chipmunk. The little striped fellow frisked down the trunk of an old cherry-tree

vanishing into a hole in the heart of the tree. Lying immediately in front of the tree and just below the hole was an old moss-grown stump. From an adjacent tree the owl caught sight of him on the instant of his going in, and swooped like an arrow straight at the opening, alighting on the stump and peering stupidly in. Fortunately for the little animal, the hole was too small to admit his enemy, who, however, with the view of besieging, settled himself complacently to wait a reappearance. The chipmunk, not being able to see the owl from within, soon came stealing cautiously to the door and poked out his head. Beholding his adversary, he vanished with lightning speed. Another wait, then again out came the little brown head with the shining eyes. This time the owl made a dive, but was not so quick as the chipmunk, who was again safely hidden. After waiting a few moments, the owl flew up to the first branch of the tree above, and shortly afterward out came the chipmunk, gay and saucy. "Chee, chee, chee!" he squeaked. "Anybody here?" Apparently no one *was* there, so he confidently sat upright on the stump and looked about him. Finding the coast clear, he flirted up the trunk of the tree, stopping as if he had been shot when he suddenly espied the owl sitting aloft. In the twinkling of an eye he turned tail and fled downward, barely making his hiding-place when

his enemy reached the door. Twice more he attempted to escape, trembling in his small doorway, looking, listening, and vanishing at the first sound of wings as the owl swooped at him again and again. Then the owl gave up pursuit and flopped away, leaving behind him a little prisoner, who dared not try to get away for fully an hour longer, and then in fear and trembling crept out, jumped to the ground, and in two or three quick springs was safe among the chinks of an old stone wall—hiding-places that defied any bird of prey that ever flew, to say nothing of a half-blinded old owl!

The little Screech Owl, of which one may see much if one lives near woods, is a sociable little bird, as are also the Saw-whet Owls, who come quite close to the house in the early afternoons almost within hand-reach of the window. They allow one to talk to them, but do not often come very close to feed while people are about.

Three young owls of this species appeared one evening directly in front of our window, sitting on a limb of the peach-tree in a funny little row, gazing complacently at the light which shone upon them, with all the appearance of having been invited to a party!

The Barn Owl is among our most beneficial owls, and shows great friendliness to our songbirds. It is not prepossessing in appearance, and

has in its face the quizzical and at the same time anxious look worn by the monkey tribe, and is, indeed, from its resemblance to a monkey called the "monkey-faced owl." One of these birds was captured this winter in the woods near here, caged, and used for window advertising in a store. Poor thing, he was very restless and looked extremely bored when he was awake, but, truth to tell, he put in most of his time sleeping, only once in a while opening on us a patronizing eye. The plumage of the Barn Owl is very striking, pale orange and white predominating and accentuated with bright reddish-brown tints.

Nesting in barn-lofts, they will in no way interfere with other bird tenants. Swallows build near them in security, and pigeons or doves nest fearlessly. A certain Barn Owl in my neighbor's barn showed much interest in the youngsters who filled the nests adjacent to her own, walking up and down the long beams in the barn loft, and gaping down into this nest or that with curious wonder in her big blue-black eyes. That she really considered her neighbors was shown fully when on a disastrous day a shrike swooped through the wide doors and pounced upon a half-grown fledgling of the swallow tribe. The little bird cried out piteously, rousing the owl, who swept up from her own nest with a wild cry, so startling the butcher bird that it dropped the nestling and

darted away—too late, however, to save its life, for the claws of the shrike had torn it badly.

The young of this curious "monkey-faced" owl are extremely beautiful, and in their nests in the hollows of trees or in barns they look like small snow-balls, their downy plumage being nearly pure white. This owl shows fine perception of domestic economy, for when the first brood have put on a moderate supply of feathers, she deposits two more eggs in the nest, the warmth from the first nestlings helping to hatch the second brood, thus giving the material part of the household more time to forage and for relaxation. Occasionally she adds another couple of eggs, obliging the second brood in their turn to nourish the third lot of youngsters.

As to owl traditions, almost anyone has heard that one calling and hooting near a dwelling presages disaster, but the mysterious way of averting this, I am told, is to go turn over an old shoe, turn it upside down—and the owl, outraged, flies away!

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY AND THE BIRDS

"No cloud above, no earth below,
A universe of sky and snow."

That was not true of the thirteenth, for the "old woman" was so busy "picking her geese" the whole world beneath her was a-toss in the eddying snow. But to-day, St. Valentine's own, is a marvel of blue, June sky that stretches kindly, promisingly over an earth-covering of dazzling, bejeweled snow. The birds are not mating, the robins have not come, but a cardinal I heard, with a hint of love-notes in his voice, triumphantly whistling from the bare, top-high branches of an elm.

Yesterday, a bitter day of storm and snow, was a busy day for birds and bird boarding-house keepers. Food was hard to get, birds were hungry, and the supply was exhausted almost as soon as spread on the board. Worried about the inadequacy of my own small board, I asked by telephone of the public school here, how many bird-boards were sustained by the children, and learned that out of two hundred and sixty youngsters sixty feeding boards for the birds were sus-

tained at the different homes. A splendid average! Some boards are placed in trees, some in windows, some in sheltered porches, and add to this number perhaps twenty-five that are sustained by grown folks in the little village, and it does not seem likely "Our Little Sisters the Birds," as the gentle St. Francis named them, will "lack or suffer hunger" in our midst when fields are bare.

If you were here in my cozy room this morning, with the glowing fire reflecting from the glass of the book-case onto the window-pane, and thence to the snow through the dim gray atmosphere of swiftly falling flakes, and sat with me watching the birds come and go 'neath an old umbrella I have put out on the board for a wind-break and snow-shield, you would certainly enjoy yourself. These stormy days you may put out food—cracked walnuts, hickory nuts, suet, and pecans (at twenty cents a pound), bread crumbs, cracked corn, and sunflower seed (the latter to tempt the cardinals who have not once visited my board this winter), and in half an hour the food will be blanketed almost beyond the birds' scratching abilities. So each day, and sometimes three or four times a day, I must brush off the snow and nuts together, clear off the board, and provide a new supply. This, as one who watches my ways is prone to say, "is sheer extravagance." (He little knows my birds pay for themselves in print-

ers ink!) Thus, to-day, hoping to win his approval by my thrifty ways, and also to make life easier for my feathered protégés, I have put up over my bird-board an old umbrella. My neighbor, passing, jeered at it for a "scarecrow." Not at all. It is the safest shield possible for winter birds in winter weather, and, though I a little bit feared the result might be the same as if it were in a cornfield, in just about three minutes a tufted titmouse slipped under, peered at it inquisitively, and fell to feeding. Followed him a chickadee; then three titmice, fat and fluffy from high living; then a downy woodpecker, who showed timidity in trying the new scheme of dining under a thing so big and black, and in hopping down onto a board from whose surface sprouted a leaning stick of pearl and silver. Doesn't that sound extravagant? But the silver is flattened by the blows of time, and the silk cover, alas! only the rags of age could possibly excuse. But its days of usefulness are not over. Its new vocation is its best, and, a long-ago gift to me from the "Friend of the Birds," what could be more appropriate than its giving shelter to her birds? Two nut-hatches are on the board examining with interest the old umbrella and digging away at the frozen suet with small concern for any evil portent. Just this instant a tufted titmouse alighted on a rib of the shelter-house, peered down through the gaping

hole at the banquet board below, and energetically flew down through it to the side of two other titmice, who scolded unmercifully at such rude behavior. They do not in the least mind if my window is open wide. They all come indifferently to eat of the nuts, and probably a little patience would teach them there is really no harm in me, and they would eat out of my hands as they certainly *do* eat the crumbs from directly *under* my hands. In fact the good Dominie has made me the gift of a six-inch board the width of a window, with a small gate that swings outward, which, being placed beneath the lifted window, shuts out the air, but enables one to thrust out a hand through the opening and train the birds into confidence. Dreading nipped fingers, I have not yet had the courage to make the attempt.

Falstaffian-looking, cheeky little beggars of squirrels have found out my board, to my sorrow. Not content with their own squirrel-house in the campus, with bushels of nuts and corn poured into it weekly, they keep sharp eyes on what's doin' at my window. The little maple in front of my window will be full of birds waiting my leisure to bring cracked nuts every single morning; and nearly every morning a great walnut across the road will show, stretched at full length on the branches, one, two, and three squirrels watching from there just when the birds are fed, and in

short order they slip down the tree to scamper across the way, scurry up to my front steps, spring one by one from the top step to the outside water faucet, and thence to my bird-board, which is hung from my front living-room window. Should I happen to be sitting by, the robber in fur pauses as if shot, puts one hand over his fast-beating heart, wondering, fearing, "Will she let me stay? Will she not?" and usually she doesn't, as cracking nuts for lazy squirrels is a little too much trouble. So in the twinkling of an eye, over the edge of the board drops my visitor, only to repeat the operation at different times during the day. I wouldn't mind the once, but my squirrels seem never to understand their "room is better than their company." Even if I generously call them to the door and they take a whole nut from my hand, they never by any chance heed my imploring words, "Now do let the birds' food alone!" Should I do as a friend does—give each squirrel one nut each morning, at a stated early hour, and then say, "Now, Nip and Tuck (which happens to be their names), that's all for to-day," and have them scamper down two stories over the vines of the house and keep their distance the remainder of the day, I would be satisfied.

While I have no cardinal on my board this winter, a friend has two—a friend whose crippled hands and arms and feet, whose whole bed-ridden

body has not been able to enchain a spirit that is ever cheerful, brave, and glad, and interested in things and people. For her these two cardinals have been whistling all winter through storms of hail and snow, and feeding familiarly, tamely on the window-sill, and nesting each year in the honeysuckle outside.

Now the tiny chickadees are slipping up and down the steel handle of my silver-tipped umbrella, with merry questioning "Dee, dee, dee's" as they grow into a sense of what this big, black thing is for. Why, to keep them warm and dry, of course, and to make life endurable to folks who have no shoes! And how the snow comes down—a whirlwind of huge, white flakes, turning into dim, distant ghosts all out-of-door things. On my window-board it is not "Bairnies cuddled doon," but birdies cuddled doon, for a bevy of titmice and chickadees are snugly ensconced in the driest corner, peering out at the weather and pecking occasionally at the nuts, mayhap sometimes glad of the glow within the room. Who knows? For birds surely do like "folks," and are in apparent sympathy with all their pursuits! Witness a chickadee who has for six years returned to a certain bird-board and the kindly ministrations of the same person. He daily eats from her hand, and his identity is established by three curly feathers in his tail, which, she tells me, are exactly like an

interrogation point. The titmouse, too, eats from her hand, but it must be always in one position. If lifted an inch from the board, it is something the titmouse does not understand, and he sheers warily away. The curly-tailed chickadee, however, allows many liberties.

The guinea woodpecker, the most beautiful of my birds, is now upon the board, lured by nice, soft pieces of fresh, yellow suet I have just laid out and hung on nails at the side of the board. Hurrah! who cares for snow when you've got some place to keep warm and dry and have plenty to eat. How the gay, scarlet color in their crowns brightens up things in this snow-time, and what a goodly appetite every bird seems to have! It's not such a long backward look to the days when there were no bird laws of protection in Ohio. Thus many there are who can recall the scourge of the "measuring-worm" in the old college campus, where summer time saw the foliage stripped from the trees as if by fire. When (as this old, sheltering umbrella, tapping its points against my panes to-day reminds me) this thing we children called the "measuring-worm" made merry with all young green leaves, and swung from the trees in millions by gossamer threads, all down the many paths in the campus, in fact from all the trees in the village; but how much more devastat-

ing and terrible it was in the forest of the campus! I have gone down those paths protected by an open umbrella from those swinging worms that, after the walk, hung like a fringe at the edges of the cover. I hesitated to tell this in a conversation on birds not long since, but quickly learned there were others who remembered the plague as well. Nowadays it's a chance that we "meet up" with a ghastly green measuring-worm anywhere. Bird protection is worth while after all. Not a sparrow has come near my protecting umbrella. It's a fact, but an odd one, that sparrows are afraid of anything that moves. Thus the flapping rags of silk warn them off when they attempt to alight. Nut-hatches, hairies, downies, chickadees, guineas, titmice (two kinds) have "called" way up into the "sixties" since the umbrella went up two hours ago.

Whether any birds slept on my umbrella handle under the silken rags last night I do not know; but at dark a friendly little chickadee was perched there, with feathers all fluffed out and seemingly half a-doze, and this morning the deep snow on the board was a network with the tracks of small feet; and at early dawn the pounding of the woodpeckers on the frozen suet awakened me to the needs of "My Little Sisters the Birds."

As an afterthought the winds rose up this

morning and snatched away my sheltering umbrella, carrying it through the air like a witch going up on her broom-stick—her black skirts fluttering, away and away in the blizzard of snow —and where it landed I know not!

FLOWER-GARDENS AND RIVER-FLOODS ON THE BANKS OF THE KAW

"For the world is full of roses,
And the roses full of dew,"

A little street right out of a book is Lee Street. It lies like a country road across the fields, with its sunken gardens and tiny vine-wreathed cots; and, dear me! all the flower-loving folk who abide beneath their shelter are my friends, stranger tho' I be! The path to town is only a little lane bordered with asters, big yellow sunflowers, and sweet clover, quite breast-high. Such tiny handkerchief plots—with hardly a spear of grass—the old brown earth yields nothing but bloom!

It looks so peaceful—Lee Street. Time a plenty have the cottagers for floral gardening, while I—ah, we are thrifty—we have only alfalfa, in lieu of lavender beds; and sheets of dried apples sunning on the grass, visited by butterflies of gorgeous hue—tame butterflies, for they tarry until "Miss Andes" (Harriet's black cat) gobbles them up appetizingly. Lee Street—the east part—is low-lying land, annually overflowed by the "peaceful Kaw" (did I not once call it?), as the

Nile enriches its banks each year. The soil is, therefore, a wonderful producer, and the little gardens hugging the cottages are wildernesses of bloom. Behind them stretch wide meadows, velvety green fields, and far away lie the blue hills. A ribbon of "creek" runs through these fields, so small a mark in a summer's day landscape; but —wait—till—it—rains! Then this tiny brown stream, that has bitten its way in a zigzag gash across the meadows, shows what it really can do!

A big, pink, summer rose stands in a little Rookwood vase on my desk—a gift in the dusk last night from the owner of a Lee Street garden. A huge bunch of purple-pink phlox went with it —a generous overflow of bloom thrust into my arms. The houses stand, also, below the railroad track, and the sturdy flower growth climbs the terrace shoulder high. An old-time rose, "Queen of the Prairies," covers the front of a cot whose eaves I can reach from the worn stone sill.

The patient labor of a white-haired "grandmother" has evolved all the surrounding beauty enclosed by her fence, and her patient love cares, too, for her heritage of a couple of small, black-eyed grandbabies, who gleefully show me how some seeds "pop!"

"Good land!" she says, as she picks for me a posy here, and here, and here. "You from Ohio?

So be I,—southwestern corner." On the instant we are "kin!" "Years ago," she adds, "before the Raid, I came here."

Every inch of her land has flowered, from early spring crocuses to the asters of September. Awakening four-o'clocks point the time o' day in the garden next. "Guten Abend" comes in jolly tones from the neighborhood of a pipe beneath the porch. This garden of "Deutschland" has, what? Naturally, tulips, also crowds and crowds of "spider-wort," nodding like a restless sea—all the graceful skeleton flowers. Orderly rows of sweet peas stretch across the grass, then come the two gardens of "Lee" that yield me greatest largess. Surely, where such quiet reigns, where bees hold carnival among honey-flowers, are only gay days and happiness. Not so! Helplessness and pain, tragedy and sorrow, have drawn lines in the face of the cheery little owner, always tired, never "donsy," who welcomes my dog and me on our twilight rambles. How the corners of my pretty rooms have glimmered all summer yellow, pink, and white with petals from this garden!

Next door, all alone in the dusk, sits an old "Son of Erin," smoking, chatting, amidst the loveliness and perfume of his dooryard, no less a joy to himself than to passersby. A year agone the old wife left it for that country we foolishly

call "Far," and his tidy, old-fashioned, lonely housekeeping I enrich with one of Harriet's pies! (Small return for his posies!)

Shall I enumerate the flowers of this "doll house" garden? One may hardly step without crushing a blossom under foot. They grow and grow and encroach on one another's demesne in a scandalous way, and it's not even a case of a "survival of the fittest." They all "survive," and thrive, and bear flowers, each in its season. Larkspur in crowds—pink, blue, white—nod in the wind. "The blue beats 'em all out; they're all rinnin' to blue!" says Mr. "Erin." Counters of the hours we find again, in this garden. Dusk, and the deep greenness a-twinkle with crowds of stars —the white flowers of the "Nicotine," and of most sweet perfume, over them hovering beautiful night-moths.

Across the fence drifts a smell of "smudge"; light blue-gray smoke floats softly above the flowers. This "kapes off the skeeters" from this bit of "Erin's green isle!" In so small a space was never yet crowded so lavish bloom, since first the blue-flags proclaimed the spring, and golden English daisies bordered all the paths. "The land is rich," quoth Erin's son; "if a seed blows over the fince, it takes root!"

All this is Lee Street in the summer. I wish I might name you the myriad flowers that grow and

glow, and that each evening I walk out to see. Snow-balls, Jerusalem cherries, tulips, "daffy's," columbine, lilies, "honesty," "ladies' delight," lady's slipper, pansies, pinks, feverfew, cockscomb, "fly-catch," "bachelor's button," Indian shot, verbenas, petunias, "old man," balsam,—I can not name them all,—and roses, roses, roses! And sweeter yet, the sprig of mint—quaint, homey herb, that sends, with its fragrance, my thoughts wandering back to the banks of silver-bottomed creeks in Ohio!

Came upon all this loveliness, then, in June-time, the sudden floods of the west, and the old boat rotting high and dry by a tree-trunk tells the story.

Came in the night lanterns flashing, voices calling, pigs squealing, and, like the "High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire," the sleepy little stream, hardly to be seen in "dry time," clutched in a mighty hand all these bottom lands. Bottom lands! Go to! It climbed the mother hills—"high, high, high!"

Who has not seen a Kansas flood knows nothing of the sudden power of water. Wakened by shouts for help, on the heels of a summer day, from my window, at 2 A. M., I watched by lightning flash my "culled folks" neighbors drive up their bewitched pigs from the bottom lands to the ark of safety (our barn), hill-top high—a

convenient "Ararat"! Two short hours of rain, and down the lanes and along "Lee Street" are the folk being brought out of their houses in boats, securely sailing to safety over the tops of barbed wire fences! The "livestock" is hurried to safe quarters, and the frantic cats scurry up the trees!

To watch the "Kaw's" placid flow, in early spring, as it turns and twists, with mirror-like smoothness, between feathery green banks; to dream away the sunset time on low-lying land of the north shore, while from blue the water turns to yellow, and the trees that march along the banks dip black, trembling shadows into the golden flood; then magically change from gold to pink, to deep rose, and soft rolls of cottony clouds drift slowly, veilingly, over the tinted mirror; the canoes pulling at their stakes seem to invert and spill a golden shower, as the rose tint deepens to purple, and flowers again in afterglow of gold and green and ashes of roses, and in shadowy blackness sparkles with the few faint stars, tossing up the wee crescent of a young moon. Ah! the "Kaw" is a smiling deceiver!

In time of peace and safety—thus. But from the south shore, above the submerged Santa Fé tracks, watch it in the flood time.

The hot June sun rose, to shine upon a multitude of people ever going in one direction, crowd-

ing the bridge to watch the river. Endlessly they come, lining the banks that are green to the river's edge, and jamming the bridge-ends, drawn by the irresistible fascination of the roaring water—water that booms (these full-moon nights) on through my dreams a mile away! Over the bridge so soon to be closed to all travel, wound an endless stream of vehicles, carrying the household goods of family after family driven out by the sudden water. Atop of nearly every load rode a lot of wide-eyed babies of every shade and degree of color: from white, to cream, and ebony blacks. Chickens crowed their excitement from rocking "coops" atilt on the wagon-tail, while wonder, commiseration, and awe filled the hearts of the beholders, we who were strung along the bridge-rail balancing in our minds the element which might be the easier to contend with—fire or water?

Islands of green are duplicated on the bosom of the river by the afternoon sun, where once was only land. The waters spread and spread, placidly, ever more widely, in and out among tree-tops, on the further shore, and among the cottages, forming lagoons, with here and there a tiny dwelling that seemed afloat among the foliage of water willows and of maples. And how they struggled to hold their own, those trees, swinging about and bowing themselves as in acquiescence,

until the topmost branches dipped themselves into the flood! Then, once more erect and hopeful, a shivering would seize every leaf and branch; powerless, but apparently alive again, the waters would suck them under, and in the end, sapped at the roots, out into the stream they floated slowly, majestically, the work of a hundred years wiped out in two days.

How the sun shone on the little empty houses facing westward! How, hour after hour, under our glass, the water crept up and up the front doors of the empty cottages, inch by inch. Snowy curtained the windows, but the water crept over the whiteness of the sills. How homey they yet looked! A letter and a bundle of papers protruding from the mailboxes at the side of front doors in that silent city! The posts of the piazzas waist deep in water, and as the foe worked its subtle way about the foundations, the tidy little cottages, white and yellow, wearily sagged to the front, the roofs grew aslant, as the waters threatened to swallow them up!

From the shore below us a boat puts out. Who ventures abroad on such a flood, and only a quarter of a mile above the dam? A woman, holding an umbrella, a man rowing. Slowly across the wide yellow flood their tiny boat creeps in among the treetops, in and out among the green-

fringed alleys of the little village resting on the waters, and is lost to sight. Up and up come the waters, the boat-houses are submerged to their roofs, and the sun shines down on the glittering river, and on the silent concourse of people, who stay on and on in mysterious fascination. Out from the treetops far away crawls the tiny skiff. Safely the journey is made back, the quest apparent long ere the boat is moored. From one of the half-submerged cottages the thrifty housewife has plucked the family wash!

Flotsam of all kinds dots the river. A pair of old shoes go sailing companionably along! From habit, apparently, they keep in step, off for a jaunt in unknown seas! A plot of earth, box-enclosed, all abloom with flowers, snatched from some veranda mayhap, comes dancing down the current. A long, long plank; something alive has taken refuge on it! Rats? No. Rabbits! Three scared little cotton-tails, who, as the dam shouts into their long ears, huddle themselves together, and are lost as the board shoots under!

Comes, later, another plank, this time bearing two roosters adrift from the safe shelter of a farmyard. "Hail to the voyagers!" from an interested crowd. If they would only float ashore! A-sail and a-sail, and the current draws them to the big, smooth billows of the

dam. At its verge, with despairing scream, one fowl springs off and disappears. The other—how, or why, or wherefore—makes the plunge, and, to our amaze, comes up still "aboard," and sails swiftly away into quiet waters, to the acclaim of uproarious cheers!

All that little city is cut off from the outside world—a city of silence and of empty houses. The sun shines strongly down. There is no wind, no rain, only a mighty silence and a flood of water four miles wide stretching at our feet; and we watch and watch, and the birds fly down to curiously investigate every sort of wreckage that dots the flood. In the branches of a lilac, at my right, overhanging the cliff's edge, a cat-bird tunes up! I spy her nest, and her mate, and the silent crowd turns to watch her as she talks, flits about, and sings, and sings, and ever sings!

It creeps, and crawls, this river; it eats up land and grain, and takes toll when it can. It swallows up a tiny island—the last remaining morsel of a widow, and her daughter, who is blind.

The "old man," she says, "fell dead the year before on our Island a' cutting wood." Then as suddenly the waters fall, having wrought ruin. The danger is over.

But the river god is not yet glutted. The wreckage must be torn away from the pier. It brings work at last for a man idle all winter—a

man with eight children. But the river takes toll, and, with the first stroke of his pick draws him under, and whirls him over the dam. And the sun shines on and on, and the birds sing.

AT THE OLD STONE BRIDGE

"Birds of a feather flock together."

Springtime—and New England! All the young forests of birch trees delicately bedecking themselves in pale green gowns. Not less lovely, however, were their garments of the fall—long, drooping branches of yellow leaves—pale lemon yellow—until a tramp among the tall, white tree-trunks was walking in a golden forest.

But 'twas spring, May-time, and New England apple orchards were noisy with birds. Birds were flying north, birds were flying south, not alone ordinary, every-day song-birds (among them no whistle of the cardinal!), but shore-birds innumerable—big white gulls, ducks of many colors, and flock after flock of the graceful, trusting gray-and-white terns.

No long tarrying they made above the winding river road that seemed their main highway, but long enough for many an interesting hour to be spent in watching them; not in nesting ways, but in their industrious fishing. From high in air they chose the spot where they would dive; then, on beating wing, would hover over the water until

my patience was exhausted in counting those same "beats." Will you believe, in one case the number mounted up to over three hundred, without the tern moving from the appointed spot, mid-air; and then, without diving at all, flew swiftly on up-stream! Shoreward bound, all these travelers, to nest in the clean, sweet-smelling sea-sand, delayed a little by a bird with, apparently, a broken wing. But none of my assistance would they have! Let me approach too closely to the disabled one dragging along the bank, and from rock and rock the crowd came swooping, squawking defiance and fierce warning as they surrounded the defenseless one with solicitous protection. How they got the lame little fellow away, I never knew; but they managed it some time 'tween dark and dawn.

But it is not of terns I started out to write you, but of a wholly new bird, and of one, I venture to say, few of my readers have seen. In any case, it was pure luck on my part to stumble into such rare company, northward sailing.

You may question that word "sailing," but it's a true one, for it was on the water I first saw them, gaily disporting themselves on the topaz-colored stream called the "Assabet." It is a river familiar to me by canoe, by water-lily paddlings, by many a picnic on a tiny island that stems its current; but to find it a place for bird courtship

was new, indeed! And the courtship of a shore bird twenty-odd miles from the sound of the sea, and thousands of miles from his or her—his *and* her, I should have said—nesting place, was farthest from my mind, as I plunged ankle-deep across soggy meadows, tramped fern-bordered roads, followed riotous rivulets chattering adown rocky hillsides, and peered into all sorts of wild-grape thickets. The chiseling woodpecker fled before my coming step; the bluebirds dashed to the fence-tops; the thrush slipped from her nest, complaining; the catbird called "Halt!" and many a bright black eye peered out questioning my right. Inquisitiveness they did not recognize as an attribute of the bird lover, so I passed them all by as "old stories," though a bird-nesting of any kind is never an "old story."

I was hunting—what? Why, the nest of the little brown creeper, always snugly, cunningly, cannily laid at the foot of a tree! But the finding was not for me, and my quest ended by the arched stone bridge, beneath which the waters of the "Assabet" slip smoothly, snatching at barberry branches along green shores, dragging them down, then swinging them back, all fresh and glistening from the ever-recurring bath. Discontented, I leaned on the rail—no new birds, "no nothing!" A whole morning thrown away!

Whirr! swoop! swish!—exactly that way it

happened, and with a rustle of wings like the sound of brown leaves, a multitude of tiny birds swept past me, alighting on the waters of the river as softly as thistle-down. I gasped, and with wide eyes watched the strange maneuvers of this army—this fleet—afloat on the bosom of the river. They swam, they dived, they zigzagged as swiftly as any energetic water-fly you ever saw. "Birds of the air and tree-tops, that swim!" quoth I to the world in general. A shaking of wings, a sudden upward flight, a fussy settling of themselves in branches, a pruning, a gossiping, a chattering, quite oblivious of me—and not the least bit in the world afraid! A horde of little birds with plumage of sooty gray, and sparrow brown, with neck of rusty red, a ring of color quite encircling it, dark-colored wings, almost black, dashed with feathers of white. In a few moments back they flew to the river, riding upon the water so securely, so serenely, slipping beneath the surface and rising again like bubbles, to skim along as swiftly, apparently, as they might on wing, and ever and always was their swimming upstream, against the current; zigzagging, always; never in direct line; darting about in great enjoyment of their bath; then to the tree again, scattering the drops in a silvery shower as they briskly shook themselves. Far they must have come, dusty they must have been, for a French coiffeur would have

required less time and attention than these travelers now gave to the care of their wings. Widely extended, every separate feather was drawn through the mouth, was oiled, and combed in way most amazing! They might have been going to a party. In point of fact, they were whiling away time on a journey to the Arctic Circle—though it required recourse to my bird books to acquaint myself with this fact. A third time, as I watched, fascinated, they descended to the river to begin once more their maneuvers, their erratic gyrations, uncertain, aimless—aimless? Not so! If not mated, yet ideas of a home and of young birds are stirring in their heads, and, all old-established customs pushed to the wall, it is the male who is courted and pursued in *this* matrimonial race.

At dark I climbed the rocky, winding lane leading to the farm-house, and, by candle-light (thinking this my one and only glimpse of the birds), I dipped deep into an old book on ornithology, to learn that the migrants were none other than "Northern Phalaropes," rare in those parts, rare in the lateness of their travels. What had belated them? By what circuitous route had they made their way? Had they started in company with that wonderful "Golden Plover" that we made friends with on the shores of the Gulf, on April 29th, where the bird arrives as true to time each year as the day of the month? Who knows?

Dawn of the following morning found me at the bridge rail, and dawn also found the travelers bestirring themselves, I feared, for flight, yet in this vicinity they remained for five days, with myself an humble attendant.

They were wonderful little birds, those phalaropes—dainty, confiding, and of marvelous grace in their movements. My first advances in the way of "bread cast upon the water" were received with evident surprise; but upon the second offering the birds swam swiftly after the supply. The cracked corn I scattered beneath the tree—their tree—close by the bridge they gobbled up as would a crowd of hungry pigeons.

In the garb of the birds I noted little distinction, but as all things seemed going by "contraries," the female wore colors of deeper dye, was gayer—as becomes the one who goes a-courting—and, as the female does not do much of the brooding, a "protective" coloring in her seemed not much matter. The pursued ones, the wooed ones, however, made it distinctly apparent that they wished to avoid matrimonial entanglements. One little bird on the water would be surrounded by a number of others, who would try by every means to attract his attention, or would crowd closely about him as the male zigzagged around in most lofty indifference. Had the tiny would-be brides known the meaning of the word handker-

chief, and had they possessed the article, they would have flirted it; as it was, no bird-wooer of a different gender ever put forth greater effort to win a mate. They would bow and bow before the liege lord, then, though a mere mite of a bird, the female would arch her neck like a swan, and glide proudly before him, barring his progress as he made all speed to escape the fair one.

For long I could not imagine what all this game that resembled "hide and seek" betokened, for it was funny in the extreme. Such determination not to be caught! Such sudden flights upstream to farther waters, with two or three birds in close pursuit; a settling of themselves upon the water; a repetition of coy ways, as the blandishments were anew pressed upon the unwilling one; then back to the bridge they would fly, the whole frolicsome lot of them. Schoolboys on a holiday could not have had a livelier merry-making.

Each day I studied the little comedy of courtship, for not again do I ever expect to "meet up" with such rare birds, or scrape acquaintance with such gentle, exquisite little creatures, or myself become an object of the commiserating pity of Yankee farmers, as they jogged over my bridge townward, doubting the sanity of such a devoted bridge-tender. On the fifth day of their sojourn, the birds were scarcely at all in the water, remain-

ing persistently in the tree, at intervals making an elaborate toilet and sleepily resting "between whiles." On the sixth day every bird had flown.

Up in the Arctic springtime a nest will be carelessly made, or the dark, ugly four eggs will be laid on the side of a small hummock near a lake, or on the shore, and the now subdued and well-trained male will do all the brooding, until, in time, four downy, yellow bantlings will appear, alert, hungry, and with the ability to feed themselves promptly.

GRATITUDE OF AN AFTER-EASTER ROBIN

"Robins and mocking birds
That all the day long
Athwart straight sunshine
Weave cross-threads of song."

Lilac time and an old lady digging and delving in her garden, a garden that has been reproducing itself for fifty odd years from the first plantings by her own fingers. After-Easter Monday—and bluebirds aflit in the foliage; warblers beginning to wing their way northward—flecks of flame among the greenery; and robins, generally first to come, tardily arriving.

Above the head of this "Garden Lady" wings of all colors soar and swing, for the birds follow her movements, attend her adown the garden walks, and "grab" for worms when the trowel unearths them.

About the sturdy, mossy roots of giant elms, maples, and cottonwoods, the crocus flowers early, in lavender and gold, all heedless of wintry winds; daffodils march farther every season amid tall grasses; narcissus and the "Star of Bethle-

hem" besprinkle the ground like stars; wild "sweet William" pinks all the shadowy places; the "prickly-pear" flames out and burns in every nook and corner; the "Judas-tree" paints itself in lilac-rose; "Bridal wreath" tosses blossomy arms about in every vagrant breeze; the biggest, puffiest snowballs hang tantalizingly high; the lilac hedge is a royal road of purple, traversed by crowds of buzzing courtiers clad in gold; and everything is wild and wandering, and grows at its own sweet will in this old-time garden, that yields flowers in every summer month for the altar of the Most High God, for I myself have helped the "Garden Lady" carry her fragrant harvest to the church by carriage loads. From crocus-time to Christmas-time, with its scarlet barberries and holly-berries, the old garden works its wonders in its own mysterious way.

To such a place, then, came the after-Easter robin.

Digging and delving in happy confidence, this old lady was suddenly startled by the sound of a shot fired!

"We are no older than we think we are," and old age held no place in the anatomy of this bird-protector as she straightened up and fled around the house in the direction of the noise, following hue and cry of her frightened birds.

In wrath becoming a follower of that sturdy

fighter, St. Paul, she swiftly put to flight a bunch of small boys, hurling after them threats of evil if they again made war upon her song-birds.

She looked high, she looked low, but no harm showed itself in tree or in shrub, but, working in her sunny kitchen the next morning, her glance was attracted by a dolorous-looking robin who came to rest upon the wheelbarrow. She chirruped to him, but he made no reply. She said: "You're a tardy bird! Didn't you know it is an unusual season? Easter is late, but the flowers came early! I've seen lots of birds, but very few of your kind until to-day. Usually the snows catch you here—now it is almost summer!"

To all of which he answered not a word. Persistently he clung to the wheelbarrow all the long day. Night found him there, night left him there for the dusk-dawn to find him. Then the "Garden Lady" became anxious, and laid the case before the "Judge," knowing it was his province to deduce from circumstantial evidence, and he proved his skill by answering: "The bird has evidently been injured; see the wing-feather sticking out at right angle from his body. We must feed him."

So, each day, a goodly supply of rations was laid near the injured one, and though wholly unable to use his wings, he managed to hop down by easy stages from the barrow to the ground to pick

up food, then to the well, where, on the curb, were kept dishes of water for the feathered folk, and where by actual count there came to bathe in one hour seventy-nine birds! Then by slow and evidently painful degrees, the bird would hop back to his place on the wheelbarrow.

He made no whimper of complaint, did the robin, but if ever anyone was lonely in pain it was he, and yet, it may be he was like a person I know who declares "Pain is company!" For, pain *is* "company." When one suffers one wants solitude; to go down into the mysterious depths of it alone. But, when pain abates—"Why, why don't the neighbors come in?" So with the robin. When he began to stir about a little, he sought friends among the birds, but everyone abjured him in no uncertain tones!

Discouraged by the incivilities of kith and kin, Mr. Redbreast then tried to scrape acquaintance with some young chicks scratching affably together about his chariot, but sympathy for lame folk went a-begging those days, and the chicks pecked at him viciously and routed him without delay. Back to his wheelbarrow, then, and his lonely convalescence.

For fully three weeks after that first Easter Monday the injured robin came and went about the garden on his two eager little feet, "roosting" at night on his barrow, and, in fact, spending the

greater part of his time there. Finally he managed to fly up to the lowest branch of the elm, and gradually his flight grew longer, but each day he came to be fed by the "Judge" and the "Garden Lady," and I begin to think he had known her from the first day of his injury as his gallant defender—the one who had so valorously come to his rescue—else why return to the scene of attack?

In any case, the bird showed every evidence of understanding that near her was to be found safe harbor, and hospitality, and he cast aside all fear. Then came a time of repairs about the old place. A sleeping porch was to be built, plumbing to be done, the house wired for electricity, drains made, etc., which brought noise and confusion into the quiet domain and scattered the birds like chaff before a high wind. When the work was finished and peace reigned, the "Garden Lady," with thankful heart, and time at last to spare, walked again among her flowers in "the cool of the day," sat upon her porch, and instantly her thought harked back to the pensioner, and she wondered to what other garden he had fled.

But her thoughts were cut short by a rush of wings. Out from the big maple, a tree commanding a full view of the porch, swept a robin. He alighted on a telephone wire, considered an instant, then straight down into the porch he flew,

sat himself upon the railing in front of the "Garden Lady," and gave cheerful greeting to the Good Samaritan he knew so well.

Very still she sat (and I wish you could see how sweet she is!) and softly talked to the bird in tones of delight, trying to make plain her joy at having him again with her, and apologizing for the interruption of their friendship, explaining that she wanted sleep out-of-doors as well as he, and that she really liked the green tree-tops for curtains just as well, and the early dawns, and the breathless quiet just before morning breaks, and the delicate notes with which all his folks suggest to one another, "It's day! day! day!"

He held his head on one side and looked wise enough! Then he talked back—in his way! "I'm glad if you do! I'm glad you've come out again! I couldn't stay with all those strange people about, and I missed you, and I've watched for you! and here we are together again, at last!" turning his head up and about, looking at her, listening to her replies, and watching with deep interest the swaying of her palm-leaf fan; and, perhaps, making promises of fealty for the future —who knows?

In any case, every evening of the summer that saw my "Garden Lady" on the porch saw also Mr. Robin Redbreast visiting her, conversing with her, enjoying himself immensely, if one

might believe in the fervor of the rolling "R's-r's-r's" of his song—"Che-r-reer-eer-err-up!"

Will he come this summer, I wonder? Wait and see if a bird remembers that long to be grateful!

WANDERINGS OVER A LOUISIANA PLANTATION

My lucky introduction to a Southern family, reconstructing its fallen fortunes, led to one long, lovely day among the "canebrakes" and thickets, and along untraveled roads, partly on foot, partly on a "tip-cart," under the hottest of Southern suns.

A brightening twilight of "Easter Monday" morning, and we were far afield. Pale blue smoke rose in straight columns from cabin chimneys, settling in long pencil lines against the faint green of far-away woods. Our road led first into the big forest, once a stately avenue cut for miles through giant trees. The trolling songs of passing darkies rang out melodiously in the soft morning air, and the ever-recurring mystery of spring was everywhere! On cotton fields, and the huge live oaks; on delicate gray-green fronds of the swaying Spanish moss; on every weed and wild-flower, from big pink anemones to the fast falling snow of the "blood-roots," — everything proclaimed a new miracle of life. Narrow ribbons of emerald hue ran across the black rows of earth

in the cotton fields, where plowmen had turned up the ground.

The dark waters of the "bayous" were alive with turtles. Big, hard-backed, clumsy fellows sunned themselves on logs, but dropped "ker-plunk" into the water at the soft crunch of our wheels.

Across the meadows (as if all *"live* houses" had withdrawn from its vicinity), tottered to a fall what my friend called an old "Reb-time house"—a relic of the war. "Hants," so the darkies said, "des flies roun' in de ole place like time! Yaas 'um, dey do!" Two-stories, unpainted, shutterless, door gaping, windows gone, sagging roof—such a sense of loneliness as we stand in the gallery yet upheld by high white pillars, in whose secure nooks the wrens and sparrows are a-building—the sole sign of life about the place, if we except the unkempt "Damask rose" in an old rose garden where the yellowing marble dial notches off the slow hours. Beyond the "Brakes," a melancholy horn fitfully calls off the hounds from an all-night hunt.

Perched safely on wheels we watch with shrinking interest a big "cottonmouth" wriggle himself across our dusty way, dragging his loathsome self down into the bayou. Cypress trees line the road and in among their thickness the great blue crane

croaks a welcome—or a rebuke—I hardly know which! O, for the nest of a crane!

"John," demands my friend of our driver, "where do these birds nest? And what are their eggs like?"

"Dunno, Miss! dunno!"

We alight again and look high, and look low, —here on the edge of the bank we find the treasure!—a beautifully colored egg, delicate green, splotched with brown.

John rolls down from his seat on the "axle-tree." (Did I say we are drawn by oxen?)

With staring eyes of interest and delight, he shouts:

"Missy, dad sho' is a Easteh egg!" Then he climbs back to his perch, digs his "prod" into the steeds he much resembles, and we jog along through deep woods—on our way to "Honey Island."

Not much of an "island" after all! A swampy bit of tufty land in the midst of a lagoon, but a-swarm with wild bees that pack the hollow of dead trees with pounds and pounds of sweetness. "Honey Island" passed and again piny woods, and through forests of "live oaks."

Though the "cane-brakes" are often carelessly fired by hunters, a rank growth of weeds and briery vines quickly spring up, and here we are

startled with a resounding "wherr-rr-rr!" as numerous pa'tridges sweep up from their "wallows."

"John" points out shady places near a blackberry thicket where spots half a yard across show that huge "rattlers" bask at high noon. A solitary buzzard flies up from the underbrush. Let's see the cause. No nest, hardly, as usual, but under the shelter of a fallen oak, huddled into a scared little bunch of downy white and black feathers, sit two solemnest of buzzard babies! Each one tries vainly to "hide his head under his wing, poor thing!" and—fearing his vociferous parent who "sits aloft"—we leave them in peace.

Deer tracks are common along the sandy roads, and deer paths mislead in all directions, if one but steps into them.

Bumblebees pay us a compliment along the way, and "John" cautiously discovers their hiding-place—a few feet across the ground in a round ball of cane leaves. It is as surprising and as ingenious a structure as any bird's nest I ever saw. This little round ball appears untenanted —perhaps "John" really did subdue, or put to flight the belligerent owners before he dragged it out to one side of the trail and left it for us to investigate. The opening into this mysterious object is all but invisible, and where, I am told, these nests are usually lined with shredded cane

leaves, we now find one most daintily cushioned with a thin sheet of cotton batting plucked from the seeds of the cottonwood tree.

A few yards further on we come upon another nest. No bees about, we tap it lightly—at a safe distance—and wait to see who is at home. Out pops a little nose, and two tiny black eyes shine upon us, and, in a twinkling, disappear again, the opening shutting almost entirely after the occupant! Another tap, and out ran a tiny red something, but I never knew what! A mouse—I think—and the question is, did the bumble-bees appropriate the house of the mouse—or did the mouse usurp a domain of the bees? I shall never know! but I fancy that the mouse is the architect in every case.

Next we "flush" a wild turkey, who, in our slow progress, grows bold enough to warn her youngsters with strident note, "Lie low! keep quiet!" and they answer, in silly fashion, from various hiding-places.

"John" points out curious piles of dry sticks laid against old tree trunks, and says, "Hunderds of 'em, Missy, in de cane-brakes, fo' an' five feet across." Nests, are these, of the wood rats, with upstairs, downstairs, and halls, and a wonderful hiding-place are its galleries for the big "cotton-mouth" moccasin.

And now it grows toward the wane of day.

We have found no real nests after all—but our long day in the woods has not been without interest—has it?

"Dat owl," declares John, "long be'n a-cryin' 'wuk dun, er not dun—sun-down—time fo' to go 'long home!' " And as we think he is thinking " 'bout de hants," back we go on our tracks.

The woods are full of birds piping all manner of even-song. The clear notes of wood thrush, the ringing call of the evening grosbeak, song-sparrows innumerable—even the big blue-jays "jangle" a few notes not unmusical; orioles—on their way north—roll out their most cheerful melody. Then twilight falls—and out from the dark forest-gloom pierces the ineffable song of the "mocker."

Someone has written this: "One cannot know bird music who has not listened to it at daybreak, or day's close, in the very heart of a Mississippi forest, or a Louisiana swamp."

Perhaps it is true.

"VIA DOLOROSA"

"Sunnyside" has a mission for it is on "Cemetery Road." When I, casting about in my mind for a suitable and distinguishing name for this big, beautiful place on "Park Hill," decided felicitously on "Sunnyside," and forthwith painted it in big red letters on my new bright and shining tin letter-box at the entrance gate, everybody laughed! Two days later I laughed also, when I discovered the same name labeled on a bottle of "catchup"! But in both cases the mission was the same—the enlivenment of mankind.

"Sunnyside"—sloping stretches of green lawn, two acres, warm in the sunshine. Leaf shadows dancing here and there on the golden carpet; tall, old-fashioned red urns running over with vines and scarlet geraniums; a big white house with green blinds, and a white veranda whose floor holds cushions in gay colors, easy-chairs, and hammocks for the lazy folk; doors and windows flung wide, and thrashers calling sweetly from giant elms and maples, "Tir-o-lee, tir-o-lee, tir-o-lee," all the livelong day.

The ground slopes finely back and front about

"Sunnyside," and the garden part, two more acres, is no less beautiful. A blue-grass pasture, with Timothy, the famous ninety-dollar Jersey cow, literally in clover, as well as blue grass. "Timothy" is pedigreed, and "Timothy's" fawn-colored kid-glove coat gets curried daily, and rivals "Clotilda's" sorrel coat in silken texture.

And then, it's a funny old house—this "White" cottage at "Sunnyside," and before our advent, was always closed to the sun. 'Twould fade carpets, and, as we bought the place furnished, I assure you the carpets were strong in color and immaculately clean, for the "auld wife" bid her "gude mon" pause at the door-sill, ushering him in at her pleasure, as she laid before his untidy feet one little braided mat, then another, and another, so on to his easy-chair, that he might not defile the carpets. Fancy putting down one foot and holding up the other until a spot was prepared upon which to plant it!

Well, it isn't like that now! It's "Sunnyside" inside as well as out, the good old sun illuminating every cranny. To be sure, the "White" house will never again be as tidy as when I entered; of this I hasten to assure the expectant and critical neighbors, for there is a lot more in life than just eternally and forever scrubbing to keep clean.

If, in the psychological arrangement of affairs, from that wondrous bourne to which we are all

trending, dear old Mr. W. returns sometimes in the moonlight to find his old cap hanging on the door-knob (just for company and with a quaint idea that it may lure him back, for I have many questions to ask of that land), fancy his delight and amazement at my charming disorder!

On Decoration-day "Sunnyside" was a beneficiary. It showered roses on two diminutive pickaninnies struggling through the heat on their way to Oak Hill, carrying a pitiful handful of wilted weeds. Said one, in answer to the query, "What is the name of *your* soldier?" "We ain't got no *soldier,* but *Jim,* he got a *grabe!*" And, emulating "Jim," I myself hunted up a "grabe" in this strange land—a grave of a good boy soldier of the Philippines, and decorated it with "Sunnyside" flags and flowers.

This is only a small example of the feeling that prevails towards Oak Hill—a feeling of enthusiasm, of protection, of deepest love towards the quiet inmates—a feeling that sends all the twelve thousand inhabitants of Lawrence, I am told, at least once a week, traveling the road to Oak Hill. "Why, it's part of home!" said one girl, and the lots are tended with reverent care, and much rivalry exists among some of these lot-owners as to whose shall look the best, and they display as much zeal as any hausfrau in house-cleaning time as to who shall get done first and show the

best results. The sentiment is unique, for there is no dread of the "burying-ground," and it is more like a cluster of little graves that surround the ivied church in an old English churchyard, where people walk about "visiting" from lot to lot, with the ones who lie beneath the sod, talking of them, and I am not quite sure they do not talk to them.

One old fellow takes pipe and book every Sabbath afternoon, and, in an easy-chair on his lot, smokes and reads and communes with the "auld wife" a year gone. People pass and repass, daily, hourly, and funerals galore; so small wonder I say to my little maid on Saturdays, "Hurry up, Susannah, and get the porch scrubbed and the cushions fixed before the funerals go by!" It must look nice and tidy and cheerful and inviting, so that, by the time they come to the foot of the hill, the "mo'ners" will begin to sit up and take notice.

"Sunnyside" is vindicating its name, just like the "catchup." Folks stop and stare, and, leaving the "Via Dolorosa," skirt the western part of "Sunnyside" by Haskell Road, so that they may longer take in its cheerful aspect. I see them, and know it's "livenin'" things up "amazin'"! The many lamps at "Sunnyside" wink mellowly at night through its thirty-two windows, and the many passers repeatedly say,

"How good it is to see your light shine out." "But are you not afraid, all alone?" "Well," I answer, "I think I am; at least I just get ready to be afraid when something flits through my mind, 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee.'" "Let your light so shine," and it shines—sunshine, starshine, moonshine, out at "Sunnyside," and a-many folk are comforted.

On the lawn at "Sunnyside" are wide-spreading elm-trees, tall maples, pine, spruce, cedars, umbrella-trees, and, running along the curving drive, stand some thirty odd Yucca palms, with twice as many shafts of bell-shaped, creamy blossoms, showing ghostly in the moonlight.

The master of the garden has toiled early and late, seeding, sowing, digging, delving, with a pair of hands all unused to toil but with a pen—his hands brown, his pride booming over the marvelous results. What matter if the "garden truck" has cost this amateur "farmer man" twenty times as much in the growing as in the buying? It has taught him the secret of the loamy earth—the unquenchableness of life, typical of the resurrection, folded away in the tiny seed that awakens at the touch of the warm fingers of the sun.

The birds at "Sunnyside" are numberless, the crow-blackbirds most of all in evidence, walking proudly about in the nodding white clover, with a "chip on their shoulder" for any bird who inter-

feres with them. In the cedar by my window a brown thrasher has her nest. To reach it, thinking to delude me, she wearily drops to the ground beneath the tree, picks up an imaginary crumb, then flits up among the dense branches, by the trembling of which alone showing to me her way. Then I peep in and see her contentedly brooding her "two brown babies," not nearly as pretty as she herself in her cinnamon-colored coat.

In an old stove-pipe in the carriage-house a tiny wren made her nest, and when I, after days of waiting to "snap-shot" them, finally climbed a ladder and turned my camera on them in the nest, in a trice out flew the three youngsters at lightning speed, and I caught but the empty nest.

On the lightning-rod above the house at "Sunnyside" is a mirror-like silver ball. Here, on a Sabbath afternoon I watched for an hour a vain sparrow who had become entranced with his own reflection and exhausted himself finally in the wearisome delight of keeping himself in mid-air on fluttering wings, that he might enjoy the picture. Sparrows gathered on the ridge-poles settled themselves on the lightning-rod itself above and below the enthusiast, watching him with eager curiosity, for he had gone quite daft, flying about and about the ball, touching his beak affectionately to his own reflection, and twittering in ecstasy. The sunlight struck sharply on the

ball, and we from the ground could see the reflection in it of the body of the sparrow. What wonder, then, that the bird itself, so close, should be deluded! Utter weariness at last caused him to leave, but with one or two returns, until his departure became final.

Orioles rear their babies in hair-woven pockets swung from the elm-tree tops; golden-winged woodpeckers carve their homes in the dying branches; cardinal birds nest in the cedars, and one and all help things out for the weary folk who, heavy-hearted, pass by "Sunnyside."

WILLING CAPTIVES

A cardinal bird, a humming bird, and a parrot: with which shall I begin?

So little there is to say of the latter he shall come first.

A shady old street on the outskirts of a Southern city, a street bordered on either side with old cabins smothered in jasmine vine. Here I strolled interestedly.

"H' are yeh? H' are yeh? H' are yeh? Yah! Yah! Yah! Yah!" A lot of rattling, croaking calls gleefully followed.

I thought of nothing, or no one, but a pickaninny, and of course his bold hail was not meant for me. Yet the words and the laughter followed me persistently until I turned about, and sought the owner of the voice, in wonder! No little darkies near, no bird in the tree, a silent, dreamy, half-asleep neighborhood, and then, around the corner of a cabin, hurriedly scrambled the author of the summons—a splendid, vigorous parrot tethered by a long, light chain to the ignominy of a chicken coop! His bowings and scrapings

when he found I was really coming across the grass were those of a courtier! His garments were resplendent, green, and gold, and crimson, and he shouted out such delighted laughter that I began to feel that something must be very odd about my appearance!

"Hail fellow, well met" was I to him—it showed in his eager greetings.

Solitude was not to his mind, and he danced from one foot to the other as I crossed the rickety back porch to knock and ask might I make acquaintance with the foreigner. Not a soul at home; so, in admiration of an unusual bird intelligence, I sat me down safely beyond his reach.

He strutted pompously, as near as might be, looked me wisely over, made a few unintelligible comments, and then launched forth into a repertoire that was not to be despised, outdoing "Chanticleer," himself with the lusty crows he eased his throat of! Followed, then, the motherly clucking of a brooding old hen, the "cheep! cheep!" of young chicks, the call of the crow, the harsh meowing of a cat, and peremptory demands for "*Is*-erl? *Is*-erl?" ending in loud guffaws. Chin in hand I watched and listened, appreciatively, as the comedian bowed, and bowed to me again, and yet again, becoming convinced, at last, that parrot language was, after all, a thing to be believed in. Finally I rose to go.

"You nice old chap," I said, "I've got to go," and I backed slowly away. The bird strained to the end of his leash, and to my utter amazement croaked out the words *"Don't* go! *Don't* go. O, *don't* go!"

And I retraced my steps—dropping weakly to the grass—expecting anything now from that weird old bird! Delighted at my return, he promptly launched out into a repetition of his whole performance, hastily jumbling his names together, and I finally left him angrily humping himself about in the grass and shouting, *"Don't* go! O, *don't* go!" as uncanny an object as might be seen—a bunch of ruffled feathers from which issued the voice of a naughty boy, fervent with pious ejaculations, or saucy with barnyard noises.

"De ole man dun had him way back," a young negress told me. "Belong to his ole mistis' in Mizzoury."

Probably he had seen war-times, and acquired the language of camps; but in entertaining me he had certainly shown himself to be "a perfect gentleman."

Can I call a cardinal bird ever a "willing captive"? Even if experience has given him naught of leafy nooks, or of wide flights, does not something inherited make his brave heart aspire to wind-lashed tree-tops for the outpouring of his song? Surely, surely, and though he was too

young to know any better than to be tempted by a voice, were not his eight years of life behind bars saddened sometimes by a longing for the bright blue of the sky?

I fear me it was. But "Aunt Jeannette," bereft and lonely, "toled" him into her window by the call of a neighbor's bird (caged), and in excuse said: "Everything I loved has been taken from me: husband, daughter. I think I ought to be left to enjoy some one thing I love." Thus, cardinal Number 2 was caught and caged in his babyhood of dove-colored garments. A common practice, this caging of song-birds not so many years back, especially of the cardinal; but to-day, well protected by legislation, these gallant fellows in red confidently rear their families among the pink or crimson of rambler-roses that run over all porches, and feed also with the chickens—so homely have become their habits. One said of "Aunt Jeannette's" bird, "If I live longer than Jeannette I will free that bird." Perhaps, because of that resolution, she really has weathered the years long after that happy day. Gay in adult plumage, the bird was substitute for "folk" to his owner long years, loving no one but her, allowing no familiarity from any but herself, learning alone the trick of singing, but not acquiring the dance habit known to me of another (sooty) Cincinnati cardinal, whose sharp ears

distinguished the hand of his owner as he unlatched the hall door, and who immediately began to croon and dance until the old man laid his white head close against the bars—and O, the joy of that bird!

Eight years, and more, and it was January, and "Aunt Jeannette" left bird and all behind her to journey to far-away shores. Her "things" scattered like chaff before the wind (in usual fashion), and at last to the one who had promised him a freedom he came as a legacy. O happy day!

Too cold just then to free an indoor bird, whose slow, untried wings would be to him a problem. So once more he waited, showing small interest in new surroundings, knowing no tricks, caring little for anything but the scratching of "stub" pens on a little writing table beneath his cage, a sound that would always draw him to the side of his cage to peer out at the mysterious twists and turns of the pen with all the curiosity of a prospective writer.

March, April, May—and in the sunny month of flowers came the day of liberty. High upon a step-ladder was placed the cage, in the midst of a garden; the door was raised, and the way was open.

"Now, what might that mean?" he pondered. "Let's investigate." To the door and back again,

repeatedly, peering out to test the reality of no bars.

No, nothing stood between him and the big out-of-doors he had so long wondered about, and trusting the Providence that had provided such an opportunity, he spread his unaccustomed wings and flew heavily to a small tree, rested, preening himself, caught the attention of two "kinfolks," who, uttering liquid notes *"Whee*-you! *Whee*-you!" swung down to him.

I wonder if they were notes of encouragement? I wonder if they said, "Fear not! Come, and we will show you!" for, all willingly, he joined them, following into an elm-tree, and there pouring forth a jubilant song of freedom.

The whole summer saw him coming and going about the house, in the trees, in the garden, easily recognizable by a split in his bill—obtained no one knew how, during his days of imprisonment.

I have been told the days of a cardinal's life are many—the years mounting up to twenty-five. If so, what joy has been that of "Aunt Jeannette's" cardinal for at least fifteen years!

And now for the humming-birds—a roomful of them, six, uncaged; a garden full of them, fifteen or twenty, homing among the graceful columbines. How swift their flight! How small their form! How exquisite their color! How friendly

their ways! They will not speed off should you be delving among roots quite near them, as they poise above the flowers, radiant jewels in quivering heat-waves, busy as any bee in their honey quest. They will even follow you, bent on pilfering should you rob the garden of its bloom, even as they followed me half way through the campus but yesterday, my arms laden with old-fashioned coral honeysuckle, pink wigelia, and dancing, nodding columbines, for red is above all else "their color," and I almost dislocated my neck in trying to watch the gauzy-winged creatures humming fearlessly behind my shoulder.

Stand flowers in the open window; they will draw the humming-birds to the feast. Summer time and June time, scent and color abroad everywhere, and the iridescent wings of those honey-seeking birds flash through the air. Watch them probe among the velvet petals of a scarlet geranium! Not a blossom is unvisited, or a petal crushed, so daintily do they feed! And then how they dust their quivering wings with gold when they fold themselves deep into the yellow hearts of the "trumpet flowers"! Ah, who could entrap them?

Well-a-day! Perhaps it was not "entrapping" to give them the freedom of a whole house—for they are among the most confiding, the most easily tamed of all the birds, and show no disposition

to escape when they learn that one is a "friend." But I guess the new laws of birddom regulate all that, these days.

From a small colony maintained in a certain home one little female was carefully put into a collar-box and taken to new quarters. Without delay she made herself at home—perching upon sticks, and quickly learning the limits of her new apartments; she was fed on honey by dipping one's finger into the liquid, holding up the hand, and down she would dart to alight and refresh herself. If by chance she wandered out through an open window, "home" soon brought her back in again. Flowers brought in from the garden also tempted her to explore, and for six months she was a much-loved, well-cared for visitor; then, when migrating days arrived, she was given her real and lasting freedom, that she might join the mighty army winging its way, a thousand miles, to tropic climes.

But what if that little, Gray Lady fell by the way? What if wings, measured by too short flights, failed of their task?

Rather think we back to old apple orchards, with their gray, weather-beaten branches, saddled with the most beautiful lichen-covered nests of our small friends—the "hummers." To June days of delight when one watches the proud owner of the home and when one makes none too free

with the stronghold—lest the "man of the house" descend in his wrath (much too great for one so small!), and smite one "hip and thigh" with his very trusty weapon—his long, swordlike bill!

MY WAY OF LEARNING ABOUT BIRDS

"All sparklings of small beady eyes
Of birds, and side-long glances rise
Wherewith the jay hints tragedies."

When one, living near college precincts, finds, in desultory wanderings o'er hill and dale, sundry bird-nests that have been deserted, nests holding yet a tiny bunch of eggs, one is apt to wonder if the method of bird-study in said colleges may not be improved upon.

Witness the closely hidden nest of the song-sparrow, deep, deep sunken in a drift of sweet-scented honeysuckles. Comes a curious crowd of "Normalities," for instance, and, following their visit, their peering eyes, lo! a frightened bird—an abandoned nest.

Witness a dove's nest in the thorny security of a young spruce-tree; too low down by far, and so open to inspection for all who go by. Two white eggs—deserted.

Witness the wood-thrush, after a brave fight for her home, leaving her eggs and making a new nest in a securer quarter.

In the hey-day of life—college life—one's

pulses and ambitions will not, usually, halt long enough for true bird-study. Most bird-study is done in the classroom, the student learning about the bird from a biological standpoint. Then follows out-of-door work, and blest, seemingly, is he (or she) who, trailing rapidly through the woods in the dancing days of spring, when leaves clap their hands in answer to the frolicsome breeze, when blossoms float in waltz-measure through the warm, light air, thrice blest, apparently, is the bird-enthusiast who, catching flying glimpse of bird-wing, enumerates the largest number in his notebook! Why, that is only a beginning—only like the glimpse of a strange face in a passing crowd!

A "personally conducted party," crashing through the underbrush at the heels of a "professor," cannot but have the effect of sending the wood birds flying into the treetops, where they surely *must* laugh at such careless invasion of nature's solitudes.

It is not an easy thing to say just how this one, or that, should pursue a course of bird-study, or in what manner they may best come to a proper understanding of the ways and words of our feathered folk.

Of one thing alone I am sure: real bird-study may not be done in crowds. A "party of one" is

the best number, at very most of two—and that's two too many!

To each of us come such differing opportunities for making acquaintance with the birds, and under such different circumstances. In some cases the bird must be hunted through the fields and meadows, in other cases the bird comes to you. Honor is thrust upon you! We might any of us, for instance, study bird books for endless months, we might plunge head over ears into bird dictionaries and abstruse ornithological works full of Latin names quite unintelligible to most of us, and, after all, have only a knowledge of the general appearance of the different birds, of where, and when, and how they live and lay their eggs and rear their young. All of this, of course, is very good and very necessary, but yet it fails to make us personally acquainted with the winged brethren. All our knowledge of birds acquired from books and preparing us, as it does, for the reception and recognition of the different varieties of birds as they come among us, does not establish any social relation with them or give us the *entrée* to their private affairs as they transact them in our gardens or in the woods day after day, with all the individuality shown in the differing ways of our *human* neighbors on either side of us. While birds of the same class have similar

general traits, a little study of them will discover to us individual birds of pronounced character and of many variable traits.

For the encouragement of those who have not access to bird literature, I frankly state that nearly all my own bird observations were made before I ever saw a bird book. Years of enforced idleness will teach anyone a good deal about outdoor life, provided they have a window that opens into the treetops and overlooks a garden. One who is thus privileged needs only to look outward to find companions innumerable, little folk who bring to the watcher of their ways jollity and good cheer, ever-deepening interest, respect, and wonder at the marvelous instinct and reason ordering the happy lives of our feathered friends.

So you see in the very beginning of bird-study there is required an infinite patience, a willingness to sit or lie and wait and watch through hours, days, weeks, years for the development of bird plans in love-making, in nest-building, in training their families, and in migrating. When once we begin our investigation, new things come under our eye each day, and the more we see and learn of birds, the more there still *is* to be learned.

A friend who had listened to my enthusiastic, if prosy, dissertations on birds, said, "Well, I've looked and looked at birds, and I never see 'em

do a thing but *fly!*" That was something, anyhow, for had she taken that simple "flying" for a nucleus and watched the wing motion of all the birds she saw "fly," how quickly would she have discovered the differing flight among the birds! Direct, as flies the oriole, bluejay, crow, cardinal bird, kingfisher, and the robin, who one and all know precisely where they want to go and accordingly go straight to it; undulating, billowy, as the goldfinches, bluebirds, woodpeckers sail through the air; circling, as anyone who will look for a moment may see how swallows and night-hawks fly around in tireless monotony. The swift has a fluttering flight, but moves in the same circling rings made by the swallows. Sparrows seem to fly with difficulty, small as they are, as does that most cheery of birds, the bobolink, and also the meadow larks. The keel-tailed blackbird steers himself by his tail, which he uses as rudder; the humming-bird flies in a long curve, but still as if in direct flight, for she straightway hits the mark she aims at, be it insect or flower. Owls fly heavily yet softly. All the warblers, the chicadee, and the wrens are restless, and flit about in a most uncertain way. The pewee sits and meditates, and from time to time darts into the air after an insect, in short flight. So, had my friend gone a little further with her observation, this much she would have discovered, at least.

To begin our study by learning to know the bird song seems naturally the easiest way, but to me it has ever been the most difficult. So many birds have similar notes. Birds are so in the habit of catching a note from each other, and until my anxious eyes light upon a glint of red-gold I am never yet quite sure that it is only the beautiful Baltimore oriole sounding his call in a few notes stolen from the cardinal's repertoire. While the oriole's song is less bold and loud than the cardinal's, its notes are very similar, and are rolled out of the mouth of the little singer like a jolly drinking-song. If one begins to identify birds by their song, it is best to be awake and listening before the earliest peep of dawn, either in bed or out of it. If the latter, then creep silently out to the woods and step quietly along to a leaf-hidden nook and there find a seat, and though you may be drabbled with dew and half asleep and strongly inclined to declare the game is not worth the early candlelight by which you dressed, the first soft, sweet bird-note that sounds will reawaken your enthusiasm.

After the morning chorus is over, you will find it an easy matter to follow quietly any bird you may select of the many about you, and, thus watching him as he goes about his affairs, you soon learn to know the song that is his. The call notes of birds are very different from their

song notes, notes of alarm, notes of warning, and the coaxing note of a lover. After a little study of them you will quickly be able to distinguish your bird by his own peculiar notes.

In our study of birds, we must first bring to it a great patience; second, a great interest; and, thirdly, a love for these little friends of ours. Hearing the songs of the birds leads us to look for them individually.

Every day the birds will show to your watching eyes some new way. Nearly every day will bring to you a new bird and a new song, especially if you are able to go out into the woods and, in deep, leafy shadows, sit for hours at a time with no one to call upon you but the birds. A field-glass when you go into the woods is a necessary thing, or a good opera-glass. I have found the latter more satisfactory for home study, where the birds are near at hand, but when one must needs turn his eyes to the tops of towering maples, or when one is interested in the "hang-bird nest," a-making in the swinging tips of high elm branches, then the stronger glass is the better, as it brings the bird-home so much nearer.

The bird-song at evening is no less enjoyable than the morning song, for by four o'clock in the afternoon every bird is again in full voice, and, led by the robin, they warble and whistle and trill until the last ray of sunlight fades. Bluebirds,

thrushes, cardinals, sparrows, robins, and finches are all heard in the evening chorus, and when they finally leave off, one by one, the robin is almost the last to be heard, and after this, late in the cool night, the whippoorwill voices his complaint and the owls hoot.

The bluebird awakens almost at the same moment with the robin, and joins her plaintive notes to his.

The tufted titmouse, sitting always alone in the pear-tree top, adds his comment, "Sweet-oh, sweet-oh, sweet-oh." No bird has a sweeter, more persistent song, and we hear him day after day as he reiterates his words and disports himself among the branches, his gray coat, ruddy sides, and splendid crest making him a conspicuous fellow.

Now the sparrows all wake up and incessantly chirp and twitter; the chimney swallows come rising and circling from sooty depths; the wood-pewee sounds her soft note, the oriole whistles, the bluejays squawk harshly, the woodpeckers drum, the catbirds sing melodiously, and the tender voice of the mourning dove is heard in gentle cooings.

The musical notes of the thrushes are plainly distinguishable, "Tru-o-lee, tru-e-ly, tru-o-lee, tru-o-lee."

The wrens, warblers, vireos, and finches all

join in a gay chorus of song, and above them all sounds loudly and clearly the ever-to-be-depended-upon robin, and even louder than his notes rings the cardinal's song, for by this time he is in full voice. His notes seem endless in number, and he sings with marvelous flexibility.

Among the thrushes last summer we had a visitor in a bird that is not usually seen on our lawn—a bird who usually keeps to the woods. Our attention was first caught by his stately way of crossing the grass. "Why," we said, "that bird *walks;* he doesn't hop like the others!" And he did walk, and that very boldly, for he came quite up to the steps of the veranda to get the crumbs we were scattering. What fine airs he gave himself, to be sure! *Walking* was, in his opinion, a step or two higher in the bird-world than the common way of hopping, and he disported himself proudly among his cousins, the thrushes, for most of the morning. It was a curious sight, and until we noted him more carefully, turning our glass from his high-stepping feet to his plumage of olive brown and his ruddy cap, it never occurred to us that he was the oven-bird (so named from his nest), or "golden-crowned thrush," as he really was. He never came again, and we never found his nest. No doubt it was in the vicinity, but, among the crowd of thrushes, we gave him little thought until he had departed.

Had we more quickly taken the hint from his unusual way of walking, we might have followed up his lordship to that securely-hidden home.

I have been asked, Do birds of the same species have a different song repertoire and different qualities of voice? That is, may we find a certain robin with musical powers beyond his neighbors?

To this I would answer, yes, and yes again, and we find it's true in many different species. Cardinals, with an unusual range; wrens, whose songs differ in length, and tone; orioles with individual notes and tones, and "mockers," with flute notes, or the notes of a violin; and all the melody that issues from feathered throats seems attuned by air, and blue sky, and whispering leaves!

One does not need to go far abroad to learn bird ways. Even in a city the birds come to us. The sociable sparrows, for instance, who lazily make one big nest that they share generously with each other, laying their eggs in it indiscriminately and by this haphazard way securing young fledgelings always in the nest, the warmth of whose bodies helps to hatch the eggs later deposited there—nursery economics. Snowbirds and juncos are also in the parks in winter; occasionally the woodpeckers, sometimes song-sparrows, tree-sparrows, or even goldfinches. In summer the parks are almost as full of birds as are the woods.

The birds who are the earliest to nest are the first to drop out of the ranks as singers, though some birds are undaunted and sing all the time. They mostly find it unwise to make much noise in the vicinity of their homes, and as the requirements of their mate or her little family keep the male bird close by, his song is necessarily cut short. In case he must, out of the joy of his heart, sometimes indulge himself in song, be sure he will take himself in another direction ere he begins.

The robins and bluebirds are among the earliest nest-builders, and while the bluebird is more silent, the robin finds it impossible to keep from talking *quite* all the time, and at twilight he is very apt to perch himself in a distant tree and warble over the story of the day.

When our bird begins to pick up strings or grasses or pieces of bark, and especially when we see a male bird feeding the female, we may be pretty sure there is a nest a-building somewhere, and it behooves us to go quietly and watch closely the way taken by the bird when she flies off with a mouthful of material. If it be a robin, look in maple trees, apple or elm trees about fifteen feet from the ground, as they rarely build very high. If a thrush in her tawny dress comes under your eye, look among the bushes, low down, or even on the ground; if a bluebird, look about you for cozy

nooks in the decayed trees or stumps, for mainly the bluebird nests in a hollow. If a woodpecker flits before your glass in nesting-time, watch where he alights and you will probably discover his excavation in a tree where the young are to be reared; for swallows, look under the eaves in a barn, or in the chimney. On the ground you will find, if you are sufficiently clever, the nest of the oven-bird—a nest with one tiny door, by the way; the meadow larks nest on the ground; also the bobolinks, whippoorwill, night-hawk, and some of the sparrows. The nest of the black and white creeper is at the foot of a tree.

To all of these rules there are, of course, exceptions, and there is where one finds most pleasure in the study of bird ways—to come across new and curious exceptions to the general rule, as one is sure to do in a close study of them, for birds have many vagaries. In any old orchard we may find goldfinch nests, yellow-bird nests, catbirds, robins, and almost any kind of tree-nesting bird. Catbirds choose, mostly, about our home, the lilac bushes or the Osage hedge; and in our maple trees the kingbird makes his home, and occasionally the humming-bird. The cow-bird, as you know, makes no nest, but always lays in the nest of other birds, while the wood-pewee generally nests in high trees. Last year showed

us a departure from her usual ways in her attempt to utilize the woodpecker's home.

The gay cardinal is sociable, and makes his nest comparatively low, in vines and shrubs,—wherever he chooses to build, and is especially fond of building in a rose trellis or grape-arbor that I know of, and ever and always uses, in the making of his nest, pieces of newspaper. He will pick it up from the street or help himself to what lies torn about the garden or on the porch, and will even carry it a great distance in order to utilize it.

After the young birds have flown from the nests, it is worth any one's while to take the nests down and examine them, thus finding out the different material used in the building of them. Some of them are plastered, as a mason works; some of them are woven, as in the case of the oriole, humming-bird, and vireo. Some are the mere scratching together of sticks on the ground, as the whippoorwill and night-hawk; others are carelessly made of sticks in bush or tree, as the dove or catbird builds, and some show artistic ideas, as in lichen-decorated nests.

Before we reach the period when we are free to examine the nests, however, we must note the rearing of the young birds, their first flight, and the actions of the parents during incubation. It

would be a difficult matter to merely find a nestful of eggs, and, without seeing the owner thereof, decide to whom it belonged, for the eggs of birds seem sometimes to have little relation to the coloring of their feathers, the very darkest and plainest of birds laying the whitest eggs. This we may learn by peeping into the nests of birds of whose identity we are sure, when they are off the nest, or by referring to any collection of birds' eggs at our command, or by studying the colored plates of eggs.

For instance, the eggs of the little screech-owl are pinkish white; the tiny eggs of the brilliant humming-bird are also white, and oval in form; eggs of the marsh-hawk, white; eggs of saw-whet owl, white; mourning dove's eggs, white. The egg of the oriole is striking, as is his plumage—pinkish, with dark red-brown streaks and blotches. The eggs of the thrush bear no relation to his coloring, as they are gray-blue. The egg of the cardinal is a pale pinkish color, and is spotted with brownish dots. The egg of the bluejay is a pinkish yellow, deeper pink at the large end and thickly mottled with olive green, showing, of course, not a single tint of the pigments that color the feathers of the bird itself. Thus it is with all the birds; we find nearly always a diversity of color in the eggs and the feathers.

When the young birds break the shell (or have

it broken for them, as in some cases when they are slow to emerge), the time for watching the domestic life of a bird is at hand. If we are fortunate enough to have the nests within reach of our eyes or our opera-glass in our garden or shrubbery, this is a matter of easy and pleasurable accomplishment; but if we must journey to the woods day after day, it requires great perseverance, for we must be on hand every day thereafter so as not to lose anything that passes. Very early in the morning, too, for birds are much earlier risers than are we. Nesting-time, birds display great individuality, and if you have become their trusted friend they will show you all their pretty secrets, as just between you two, and "don't ever tell!"

Our earliest spring bird not counting the cardinal who is with us all winter and sings *his* spring song the very first of all, is the tufted titmouse, who comes quietly into the garden, and before we have seen him he tunes up and confidently informs us that life is "Sweet-oh, sweet-oh, sweet-oh," and he repeats this hour after hour for days at a time, to be soon joined by the bluebird, who announces, "Here-I-be, here-I-be, here-I-be," and then we know there is no question as to spring!

But—and here is the crux of the whole matter —if you do not *love* a bird—you may as well

not hunt for one. The study of it would be only dry-as-dust-work. But if the song of a bird is in your heart, if the marvelous colors of the birds stir your sense of beauty, if your own troubled soul can, and *ever will* rise on wings of gladness from earthly woes, then in *you* will be, and *is* "kinship" with the birds, and I write of one whose life was music but in whose throat was no song and whose one uttered wish of heavenly places was: "If, there, I can only *sing!*"

A BUZZARD'S NEST

"Don't the buzzards ooze around up there jest like they've allus done?"

He's not pretty to look at—the buzzard, he's black, and brown, and ugly; neither has he the gift of song; nor are his feeding habits to be commended, but, if you run across his babies you will be surprised. He lives all around, and about in the country of Ohio—and there is a winding old road that leads to "Riley" just west of Oxford, where, along its clover-scented borders, I have watched many times these great, heavily flying birds rise from the under brush on the bank of the creek and flap themselves across the fields uttering loud, discordant cries; but, search as we might (and hunting for a buzzard's nest is a very precarious business), we were long in discovering its locality.

The bright eyes of two small farmer lads first found the nest in question; they shared the "find" with a certain western "Thoreau," scientist, philosopher and country-man who surprises all of Nature's secrets, and he in turn led me into knowledge.

Far, far over the fields and down into the deep woods, and there, under the exposed roots of an old oak tree, we found the nest. When we reached the place the old bird was at home, but, evidently suspicious of our intentions, she raised herself and sailed into the air, not alone with intent to retreat, but also to protect her home, and taking, of course, the offensive. It required no little maneuvering to keep out of her way, and only after she had left the vicinity could we come close enough to examine the nest and its contents. Here we found, snugly hidden under the roots of the tree, in a deep hollow and lying on the bare ground, two large eggs, in size like those of a turkey, but not quite so pointed at the smaller end. The larger end was splotched with dark brownish-red marks, and, elsewhere, the eggs were covered with very light speckles—not at all an ugly egg.

To the fascinating spot we journeyed again, and again all through May and well into June, only to be cheated at last from a sight of the birds emerging from the eggs, for, in an interval from one Friday, until Sunday morning, the eggs hatched, about the third day of June. On our first visit after this event we found the mother bird covering her young, and, only after much prodding with a stick was she induced to leave

them, threatening us, as before, with divers things. There, in the gloom of the almost hidden home, lay two of the whitest, softest, chick-birds ever hatched. Downiest of bantlings were they, like balls of cotton, and smaller than two newly hatched chickens—just two white splotches on the ground, inert, and quite incapable of holding up their heads or moving in any way. Our surprise was great at discovering the young to be of such singular purity of plumage. The tiny birds, though downy like young chicks, had none of the activity of the latter, but lay so still one might have thought them lifeless had not a little poking stirred them into uneasy motion.

From time to time we revisited the nest, to note the progress of growth. They developed slowly, but by July 1st they had reached the size of a two-thirds grown duck and still retained their white plumage—a wondrous contrast to the parent birds with their glossy purplish black feathers and fierce red throats. The nest—the home, rather, for there was no nest—we always approached with great precaution as one hardly cared to encounter the old birds, and yet hesitated to lose the chance so rare of studying the development of the bantlings. As they grew they became active and belligerent, and would hiss loudly, like scolding geese, at our approach, and show

fight when prodded with sticks. This was done in order to force them to rise, that their entire plumage might be seen.

At four weeks old the young birds walked about uncertainly in their wide dwelling place under the oak roots, and made no attempt at flying for the very good reason that their long wing feathers had not appeared; but when they did start to grow, it was with marvelous haste, and a week later they were an inch and a half long and were accompanied by a similar growth of tail feathers.

The birds now presented a striking and very beautiful appearance. The wings and tail feathers were purplish black, while the plumage on the rest of the body was still pure white, and, having had four or five weeks growth, resembled nothing so much as downy white ostrich tips.

The old bird brought all manner of food to these youngsters and laid it down in the nest for the young birds to peck at, which they learned to do at an extraordinarily early date. The contrast presented between the young birds and the old ones was startling, and one dreaded to see the great, ungainly mother settle down by the dainty young birds, lest the black of her wings might rub off.

To watch the transformation of these young birds into a similar likeness to the old ones

promised to be an interesting study, but just at this stage of their development some enemy discovered the nest, and on a later visit we found the youngsters lying dead. Had this not occurred, they would, in all probability, have been ready to fly by the end of the seventh or eighth week after they were hatched. This seems a long time in comparison to the early flight of our song birds, but the body of the buzzard is so much larger and heavier it requires a good deal of strength to lift it into the air. The contrast between the diminutive size of the young birds when first hatched and their further marvelous growth is amusing, for at first sight they had looked not much larger than an over grown silver dollar as they lay on the ground.

Had the nest not been destroyed or the birds injured, the old ones would have occupied the same spot for years, as a buzzard lives to a good old age and is very averse to "moving."

The flight of a buzzard is full of grace. The wings measuring over six feet are curved upward at the tips forming an angle to the body and these huge propellers require but few motions to carry their owner high, and higher to soar easily or to float without apparent motion. But, high as may be the buzzards never fail to keep watch on what transpires below, and let one bird but discover carrion and drop to it, the news flies fast

above, and over a long region come birds flocking to the feast; how the fact is transmitted in mid air is a marvel.

In our northern states the buzzards come in for small notice but in many southern cities they are true scavengers and are in every way protected.

In New Orleans these big ungainly birds drift in from the swampy land of the bayous, from the shores of the "Golden River" from the lake borders of Pontchartrain, and settle heavily in the uncleaned streets of the French quarter: here they gobble up fearlessly all manner of garbage, forming a curious and interesting spectacle.

Gulls and terns, protected in the north are scavengers of the wave in all harbors following ships in and out of port, but there is no street cleaner that excels that ugly bird of heavy wing—the buzzard.

Out in the swampy land beyond "Metairie Ridge" I found a buzzard's nest containing two half-grown chicks pridefully stepping in and out from the shelter of the great roots of a live oak, eyeing me with no fear, but, did I show signs of familiarity, hissing at me like cross young goslings.

The old ones up aloft scolded out warning, threatening me everything, and kept such eager watch on my movements as to frequently become unbalanced on the limb, and clumsily tumble from

it to catch themselves in ponderous flight to another tree.

I know of only one buzzard who lent himself at all to domesticity, and the care of woman-kind, and I assure you it was a benefactor who laid hands on the big ungainly fellow at all! But "she of the Tender Heart" overcome by compassion when, broken of wing, big, black and repellant, his strong red neck lying limp, he fell from out the blue, straight into her patch of sweet peas, gathered him up in her arms, and carried him into her summer kitchen—and disappointment awaited sundry small boys whose heads appeared at once on the fence—little dreaming that their quarry had drifted into safe hands.

The summer kitchen, vine shaded, was not an unpleasant place of refuge, window-lighted, and with one long wide upper shelf.

After a bath in witch-hazel the bird was left on the floor to "dry" but he soon managed to flutter to the top of a stove (fireless) and from there to the shelf where he retired to a corner and vented his gratitude in hisses.

The setting of the broken wing was out of the power of his preserver but his appetite she quickly satisfied with raw beefsteak, a clean food that had not often come the way of this carrion

picker. For a day or two the captive brooded in a corner not allowing himself to be persuaded to come out to eat, then hunger got the better of obstinacy, for he showed no fear, and custom and kindness won his carnivorous heart, and the pleasant voice of his friend brought him promptly, sidling along the shelf, to take pieces of meat from her generous hand.

As "she of the Tender Heart" was too small of stature to reach the shelf, she climbed from floor to the stove top, and from thence made a long stretch to reach the "buffet" and when the buzzard heard milady beginning the pilgrimage the long red neck would be immediately stretched over the shelf's edge in curiosity to see what would come next. With drooping wing, exactly as a song bird voices delight, so this clumsy fellow welcomed his friend and his food, uttering thanks, or greetings in hoarse croaks or grunts of satisfaction. For many a day the broken-winged bird abode contentedly in that summer kitchen; then the window opposite the shelf being partly opened at the top, he managed in some way to gain the opening and disappeared in the most amazing manner, broken, dragging wing and all!

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